



Word Keys Which Unlock Revelation

Son of Man Vision

by Duane Spencer

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VOLUME ONE

of a Commentary on

THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST





The
"Son of Man
Vision"

By
DUANE EDWARD SPENCER

Author of "Word Keys Which Unlock Scripture", "Gospel in the Stars", "Son of Man Vision", "The Seven Epistles of Jesus", "Throne Room Vision", "Word Keys Which Unlock Christmas" and "Word Keys Which Unlock Calvary."

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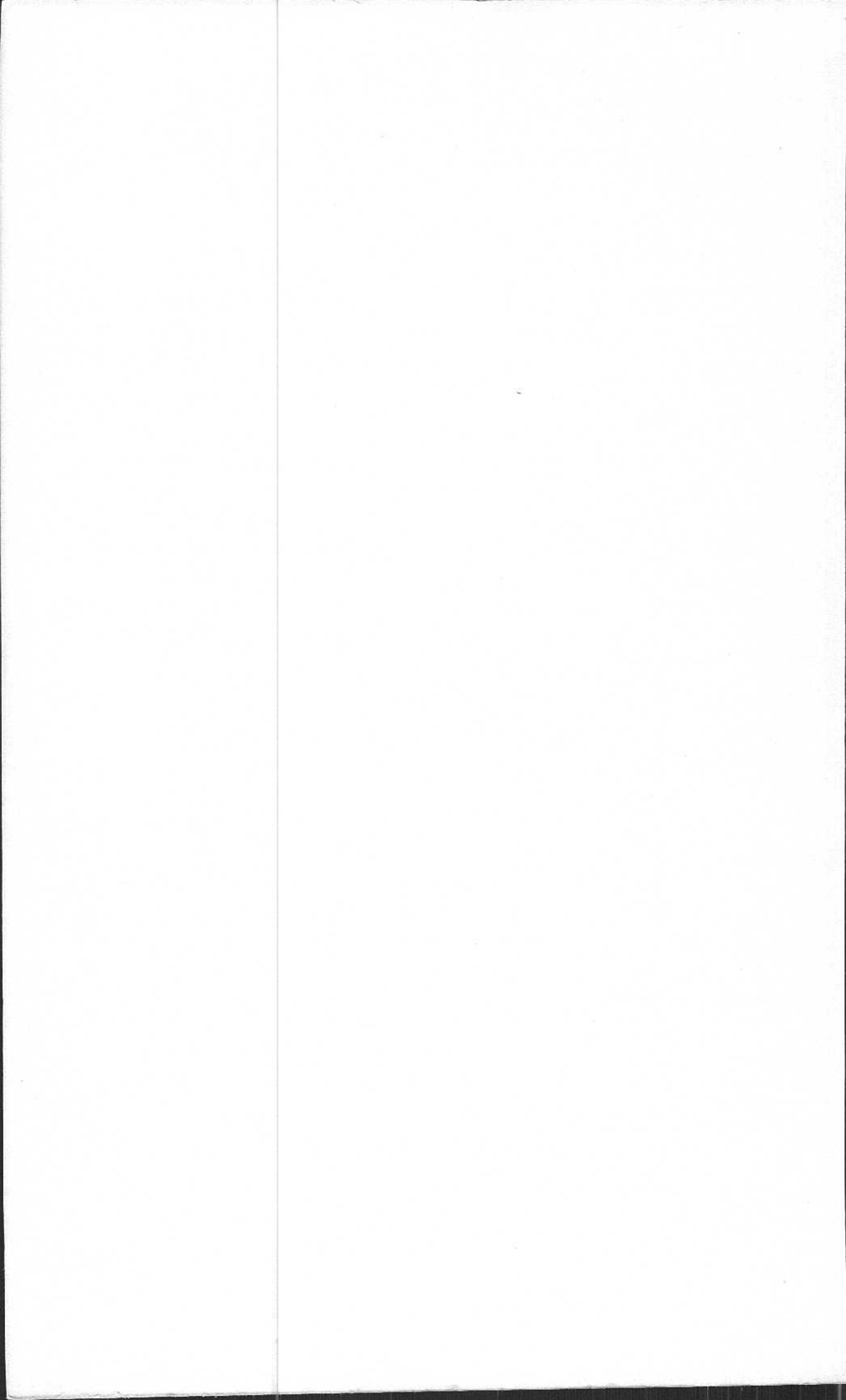
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To Mary Alice

*For she herself also hath been a
helper of many, and of mine own self.*

—ROMANS 16:2



Introduction

The correct title of the last book of the Bible is given in its opening verse: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ—." This book, therefore, is not the revelation of John, as per the title given the Apocalypse by early editors of the N.T., nor is it a personal revelation to John, as verse one also reveals. It is the "unveiling" or "uncovering" of Jesus Christ in terms of who He really is—The Righteous Judge, our God. This revealing of the Person and Work of Jesus Christ will be accomplished in a most effective way through the use of oriental imagery, which, for the most part, is elsewhere explained in Scripture. In its chapters we shall discover that our blessed Saviour will be perfectly identified as the Jehovah of the Old Testament, tabernacled in our midst.

Martin Luther once wrote: "There is only one book—the Bible; and only one Person—Jesus Christ." In a very real sense this is true inasmuch as He is the blessed Theme of all Scripture, for God is delighted to exalt His Son as the only Mediator between Himself and man. The Son of Man of the gospels is shown in this final unveiling to be none other than God the Son, the Lord of Glory in human form. "This same Jesus" is further revealed as the Coming One who is to judge "the quick and the dead."

In its position as the final book of Scripture it is altogether fitting that Revelation should be a book of consummation. Just as the first book of the Bible is a volume of "beginnings," so, also, the last book is a record of "endings." In Genesis we find the revelation of the origin of the heavens and the earth. In the closing book of Holy Writ we find out how they will at last be consumed. The first book of the Bible tells of the initial activities of that old Serpent (the Devil) and the last book tells of his final activities and doom. Genesis records the beginnings of sin with its resultant curse, just as Revelation reveals the end of sin and the curse. In the opening chapters of Scripture we see the moment that death had its beginning, and in the closing chapters we see the moment in which it has its terminus. Yes, indeed, the book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ forms a fitting climax to the whole of Scripture.

It is obvious that the correct interpretation of the Apocalypse will be in harmony with the overall teaching of Scripture. The oriental imagery of its symbols should be identical in meaning here as they are in the rest of God's Book. That it IS a book which must be understood in the light of normal Biblical symbols is quickly seen as the "sign language" of the Old Testament easily unlocks its mystical figures.

We have referred to it as the Apocalypse because that word is a transliteration of the Greek name for the last book of the Bible. The word means "unveiling." Obviously any book that "unveils" Jesus as He is in His Person and Work will bless all who study it.

Irenaeus, one of the early church fathers, declared that John wrote the book of Revelation during the reign of the emperor Domitian, nearly seventy years after the death of Christ. Since the early followers of The Way refused to worship the Caesars as "Lord," they were subjected to public ridicule, loss of property, banishment, and even the loss of life. However, as horrible as some of the punishments were, the early Christians gladly accepted tribulation, torture, and death as a privilege, and sang praises to God that they should be counted worthy to suffer for Jesus' sake. Inasmuch as one of the primary doctrines of the early Church was obedience to Civil Authority, as Paul asserts in Romans 13, the followers of The Way willingly suffered abuses of every kind and degree in their eager desire to please their heavenly Master. Some wondered, however, if the day would ever come in which wrongs would be righted. The book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ as Righteous Judge declares that there is a dread Day of Judgment coming in which the Lord of the Universes and His Bride, the Church, will overthrow the hosts of the Evil One and bring order out of chaos and exalt the righteous, as the unrighteous are cast into the fires of an eternal hell.

I am very much aware of the various 'systems' of interpretation, such as the Historicist, the Futurist, etc., but I am also aware that there is danger in any attempt to force the mould of a system upon the Word of God! May I suggest, therefore, that we might best approach our task by looking to the text to arrange its own 'system', for John (moved by the Spirit as he is) has carefully organized this book in a most orderly

manner. The grand way in which one series of 'sevens' succeeds the other, throbbing with an ever-increasing crescendo towards one climactic judgment after another, shows forth a careful Plan. In this Plan the terrible wrath of Christ as the Righteous Judge of the Universes is fiercely declared. Rights will be vindicated and wrongs will be condemned! Paralleling this display of the righteous anger of the Almighty, the Lord Jesus, is also to be seen the ever-unfolding revelation of His wondrous love for His Bride, the Church. It is, indeed, a "Revelation of Jesus Christ" as He really is, which greets us in this magnificent book which forms the capstone of The Word of God.

It is my firm conviction that we are living in the last hours of the end times. It is my earnest expectation that the Rapture of the Bride will take place in my own lifetime. In this, of course, I may be mistaken, for there is no way of establishing a date for the snatching up of the Church by the heavenly Bridegroom. However, as we shall see, the only thing between us Believers and the Rapture is the "shout" of the One who cried, "Lazarus, come forth!" and he came forth!

Now, as we begin this detailed study of the Revelation of Jesus Christ, let us remember that the unveiling is two-fold: (1) Jesus is revealed as the Son of God who in righteousness condemns those who reject The Truth and accept The Lie, and (2) He is the heavenly Bridegroom who blesses and rewards those who have rejected the word of the Serpent and have accepted The Word of Truth.

THE SON OF MAN VISION

(Revelation 1:1-20)

"THE REVELATION OF JESUS CHRIST" is the correct title for the last book of the Bible. It is not "The Revelation of St. John the Divine," as the translators of the King James Version entitled it. Fortunately most Bible students are aware that the names of the various books of the Bible, the arrangement of the Scriptures into chapters and verses, and the dates given in the chain reference columns, (as well as the various footnote and reference systems,) are not a part of the "Inspired Text." These things are all designed to serve as aids in the study of the Word of God, but they are not part of the original writings.

THE WORD "REVELATION" is the translation of a Greek word (apokalypsis) which means "to unveil." Our English word 'Apocalypse', which is often used as a title for the last book of Sacred Writ, is a transliteration of the Greek word translated "Revelation" in our text. It is also translated "lighten" in Luke 2:32 where Simeon speaks of the Holy Infant as "A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and The Glory of Thy people Israel." Again, in Romans 8:19, the Greek

word translated "Revelation" in our text is rendered "manifestation." Paul says, "For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God." In First Corinthians 1:7, the Greek word 'apokalypsis' is translated "coming." We read: "come behind in no gift, waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." And, again, the word which is translated "Revelation" in our text is translated by the word "appearing" in First Peter 1:7. The apostle encourages the early Church in its time of suffering with the words: "be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In each of these instances the word has to do with making that which was previously hidden: plain. The Gentiles in darkness were to be brought to the Light who is none other than He who is Israel's "Glory." The entire creation anxiously awaits the day when the sons of God shall be revealed as victors with Messiah when He comes in power and great glory. When He is "unveiled" we, too, shall be revealed. Our waiting for the "coming" of the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of that wonderful day when we shall "see Him as He is," when He shall be perfectly revealed and we no longer view Truth through a dim glass. So, also, the reference to His "appearing." When He comes to rapture His Church, He will unveil His Person to our adoring gaze. The Apocalypse, therefore, is to be read with expectation that we shall understand this portion of The Word of God. The very name of the book, "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," indicates that it is designed to make that which was not previously understood, understood; and that which was difficult, easy.

While we are on the subject of the correct title of this closing book of the Bible, let us remember that it is "Revelation" (singular), and not "revelations" (plural). This is no collection of 'revelations' of various kinds. It is one great and glorious unveiling of Jesus Christ as Lord over all, and of the "things to come" between now and the end of the age.

We observe in verse one that this Revelation is said to be given to the Son of God by His Father, with the specific intent that the Son should pass it on to His "servants." If we, like Paul, are the "servants" of Jesus Christ, (Cf. Philippians 1:1) then we can rest assured that it is the will and pleasure of God to "unveil" His Beloved Son in all of His triumphant glory as we study the Apocalypse.

WHICH GOD GAVE UNTO HIM

Interestingly enough there are some commentators who are embarrassed that this verse before us should state that the Source of the Revelation is the Father, and that it is given to Jesus to pass on to His followers. There are some who seem to think that such an obviously dependent relationship takes away from the truth that He is the Eternal Son of God. Not so! In the Gospels the Deity of Christ is plainly stated, and our Lord claims equality with the Father. In fact it was for this very reason that the religious leaders of Israel sought His life. (John 5:18) The Gospels also record our Saviour as testifying that His message is not His own, but that it was given to Him by the heavenly Father. (John 8:28) Never do we see our blessed Lord acting or speaking independently of His

Father in heaven. Even though Jesus is God the Son, "being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:8) Having clothed Himself in our humanity, through the virgin birth, the Son of God assumed the relationship which the Father purposed that man should have: the relationship of slave of the Creator. The prophets understood this, even though they marveled at it, and referred to Him as Ebed Yahweh—the Slave of Jehovah.

TO SHEW UNTO HIS SERVANTS

Inasmuch as all of the titles of Christ which are shared with us are ours because (first of all) they are His, it is important that we see that the followers of Jesus are the "servants" of Christ because He is The Servant of Jehovah. Although our Lord is the True Son of God, He is also declared to be the Slave of God because He is absolutely obedient to the Father in every detail.

As we have shown in our analysis of the word "IMAGE" in our word dictionary, "Key Words Which Unlock Scripture," man was created to "image" the will of his Creator. In other words God created man to be obedient, which is to say that He created man to be His servant or "slave." When Adam responded to the word of Satan, rather than the Word of God, he "imaged" the Serpent rather than reflecting the "likeness of his Maker. Try as he will, man can never escape his role of slave to a higher power. All he is

capable of doing, as a "free agent," is the choosing of his master or Lord. This choice determines many things, but above all your choice and mine determines (1) our rewards or wages, and (2) where we shall spend eternity. Satan, who is Sin personified, pays his servants with death, and they spend eternity with him in the Lake of Fire. God, however, gives His servants the gift of Life, and they spend eternity with Him in the celestial courts of heaven. Satan pays off in torments, fear, and misery. God the Son freely gives pleasures, confidence, and joy. Man cannot free himself from what God created him to be, a slave to a higher power, but he can determine whom he will serve.

Perhaps one of the reasons that the last book of the Bible has remained a sealed book for some is that they have abhorred the thought of obedience to God. Freedom to them has meant "being one's own boss," and liberty is conceived as doing that which is right in one's own eyes. Such do not realize that the truly "free" man is he who completely obeys the laws which govern his land. It is only the disobedient man who is guaranteed incarceration and loss of liberty. Our text declares that "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him" is to be shown "unto His servants." It is to the slaves of Christ, who incidentally are thereby the slaves of God, that the wonderful unveiling is to be given, for only the obedient ones can be entrusted with the mysteries of Jehovah. Let those who would know the meaning of God's revelation of His Son rejoice in their privilege of slavehood, for

it is only the obedient ones who are treated as friends by the Lord of the Household.

During the age in which the Apocalypse was written there were more slaves than freemen in the Roman Empire. Because of this it was unlawful for any man to bear a mark which identified him as a slave, lest those in bondage should organize and rebel. Just as long as a slave was submissive to the will of his lord he had freedom of movement like a freeman. When it became apparent that he could be trusted completely, for many slaves dearly loved their masters, a slave might even be called "friend" by his lord. However, it should be carefully observed that only those who proved their loyalty by their absolute obedience ever merited the relationship of "friend."

Please observe with care the stipulation laid down by the Lord Jesus when He speaks to His disciples about the matter of "friends." In John 15:14 we read : "Ye are My friends, IF ye do whatsoever I command you." Note the "IF" clause. IF the disciples will be obedient to His commands, which is to say that if they will be His yielded slaves, He will treat them as His friends. The obvious reversal of that equation is, "If you will not obey Me, you may not enjoy the intimate fellowship reserved for friends." This, of course, has absolutely nothing to do with salvation, but is a pre requisite for close fellowship with the Master. It is the basic requirement for inclusion in the "Inner Circle" of the Friends of Christ. (See "ABIDE" in Word Keys Which Unlock Scripture by the author.)

A prime example of a slave who showed himself so trustworthy that he enjoyed the personal friendship of a Pharaoh, is the man Joseph. Although he was really a slave all of the time, still Joseph was brought into the intimate counsel of the King of Egypt and placed in authority over the entire land. As a slave he was placed in authority over free men, even those of the household of Pharaoh. In Genesis 41:40 we read the words: "Thou shalt be over my house, and according to thy word shall all my people be ruled: only in the throne will I be greater than thou!" One could hardly rule without being in the intimate counsel of the king as a personal friend, and one would hardly be treated as a "friend" were he not loyal and obedient to the King!

Now let us remember that all of this has been said with reference to our text where it is declared that the Revelation of Jesus Christ was given to our Lord with the declared intent that He share it with His "servants" or "slaves."

We have not carelessly used the words "servant" and "slave" synonymously. In the first place the word "servant" in the days of King James meant the same thing to the reader as the word "slave" does to us in our time. A man's servant in those days was chattel, and he was the personal property of his master. He had no freedom to choose where he would go or what he would do. Therefore, when the translators of the KJV sought a word to render the Greek DOULOS they chose "servant" since that word carried the idea that

"slave" does for us today. Examples of this may be seen in the novels of Charles Dickens.

The Christian DOULOS is a slave by choice. He is delighted to assume the same role before God and his fellowman that he observes in his Lord. He remembers how Jesus portrayed Himself as Ebed Yahweh, the Slave of Jehovah, by washing the feet of the disciples. He remembers also that the Master said on that occasion, "Ye call Me Master and LORD: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13:13-14)

Paul, Peter, James and Jude all designate themselves as the "slaves" or "servants" of Jesus Christ. Of course these men were Hebrews and as such they were familiar with the Old Testament law concerning the bondslave. In Deuteronomy 15:7-18 we have the regulation concerning the man who lost his freedom, becoming the slave of his creditor for six years. At the end of the sixth year he was to be set free. If, however, he wished to remain a slave because it was obvious that he was better off in servitude to a good master than going it alone, he could choose to do so. There was also the law for the binding of a purchased slave in Exodus 21:1-5 where we read: "If the slave shall plainly say, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free; then his master shall bring him to the judges; he shall also bring him to the door, or unto the door post; and his master shall bore his ear through with an aul; and he

shall SERVE HIM FOREVER." The hole in the ear, adorned perhaps by a gold ear ornament, declared to the world that such a man was a slave by choice, and that he had a good master. With this in mind we find Paul saying to the Galatians: "as slaves of Christ do the will of God from the heart." (1:10)

May we gently suggest in closing this particular word study that if the title "Slave of Jehovah" was acceptable to the Son of God who was "obedient unto death, even the death of a cross," and pleasing to the apostles, it should be good for us who call ourselves, "Christians" in this day and time! Certainly we are aware of the fact that only the obedient can know the joy of intimate friendship with the Lord, and only the slaves of Jesus will receive intimate counsel from the Master. Our text reads: "The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His slaves things which must shortly come to pass..."

WHICH MUST SHORTLY COME TO PASS

THE NEXT WORD which catches our attention in this opening verse is the word "shortly." This is an unfortunate rendering of the Greek word TACHEI from which we get our English word "tachometer." A tachometer measures velocity, and is what might be called a "speed meter." The idea expressed here is that the things which are to "come to pass" will take place with great rapidity once they get started. The same Greek word is translated "speedily" in

Luke 18:8. There we read the words of Jesus who said: "Shall not God avenge His own elect, which cry day and night unto Him, though He bear long with them? I tell you He will avenge them SPEEDILY. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?" Here, in this verse which deals with the Second Coming, our Lord declares that when He acts in judgment it will be with great speed. There will be no great, long-drawn-out process, but a swift avenging of the righteous. In like manner, the same Greek word (tachei) which is translated "shortly" in our text should be rendered "speedily" or "with great rapidity." The idea being that when what must happens happens, it will take place in a very short period of time, that is in swift succession.

Next notice the emphasis which is placed upon the absolute necessity of these "things" coming to pass. John says they "MUST" come to pass. All that is to be unveiled in this book has the Divine, pre-determined imperative of events scheduled by God on His Eternal Calendar.

HE SENT AND SIGNIFIED IT

The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto Him, to show unto His slaves things which must take place with great rapidity (once they begin), was delivered in "sign" language. Our text says that He "signified it by His messenger unto His slave John." Perhaps we can see what is being said by pronouncing

the word "signified" as SIGN-ified. The Revelation of Jesus Christ, then, is to be given in sign language. He is to be unveiled through Hebrew symbolism. The language of the book is to be purposely designed in a way that will make the meaning as clear as day to the slave of Christ, and as dark as midnight to the person who does not know oriental symbolism and its meaning. We are warned in advance that the key to the book is symbolism, and we will soon find that they are symbols found throughout the Old Testament and (for the most part) easily understood.

This message, symbolically given, is said to be sent by way of an angel. In fact it is stated that the heavenly messenger is "His" (that is the Lord's) angel. This brings up an identification problem that is by no means simple. The term angel is used of three separate orders of beings in Scripture. The Angel of the LORD is used as a title in the Old Testament for the blessed Second Person of the Holy Trinity who is the Father's Messenger to man on numerous occasions. As a rule the word "angel" refers to a superhuman order of created beings which are divided into two categories: holy and fallen. Then, again, the term "angel" is sometimes used of men who serve as messengers of the Most High God.

BY HIS ANGEL

The Greek word ANGELOS means "messenger." As Donald Gray Barnhouse used to say, "Had there been Western Union messengers in the time of John, they would have been called "Western Union angels,"

for angel means messenger." In this last book of the Bible the word is used for men as well as angels so that it is best to always think of its meaning of "messenger." In several instances the term is used of The Angel of the LORD.

THE ANGEL OF JEHOVAH is a unique figure who makes His appearance again and again in the pages of the Old Testament. In each instance this Person is obviously a thinly veiled manifestation of Jehovah in bodily form. Of course it is understood that whenever God manifests Himself in the flesh He is known to be God the Son, the Second Person of the blessed Trinity. As you look up the title in your concordance you will discover that The Angel of Jehovah is given all of the appellations of deity in the Old Testament passages where He makes His appearance. In this the student should remember the rule, "Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other."

The Angel of the LORD, then, is to be understood to be none other than God the Son in the act of manifesting Himself to man. As God the Son, He must be recognized as a non-created Being. The Second Person of the Trinity is the Redeemer of the people of God. With this in mind note what is said by Jacob, whose name became "Israel." In Genesis 48:15-16 we see that "the God who fed me" and "The Angel who redeemed me," are identified as one and the same person, due to the poetic parallelism of the Hebrew. Apart from this it is apparent that the Son of God is the heavenly Messenger of God who is the only One

able to "redeem" God's people. Therefore the Angel of the LORD must be God the Son, our Redeemer. This same amazing personality is undoubtedly seen in Genesis, chapters 18 and 19, as the Messenger who speaks to Abram concerning His plans for Sodom and Gomorrah. In some verses He is referred to as one among three "men," while in other verses He is one among three "angels," while, in still other verses, He is declared to be the LORD (Jehovah). It may be seen, by an examination of these and other passages where Jehovah is represented as an "angel" or "messenger" that the term is used for God, as well as for man and for created spirit beings.

UNTO HIS SERVANT JOHN

John, the Beloved Disciple of Jesus, is surely the "John" referred to as the amanuensis or secretary to whom the Lord Jesus dictated the letters to the Seven Churches. Surely it is the author of the Fourth Gospel who so carefully structured his gospel with a series of sevens, (seven "I AM" sayings, seven "signs," etc.), who recorded all that he was privileged to see in these visions. After having weighed all of the pros and cons, I am personally convinced that the human author of the last book of the Bible is John the Apostle. You will observe that he, like Paul, James, Peter and Jude is pleased to refer to himself as the "servant" (or "slave") of Jesus Christ. Certainly one thing can be said with absolute assurance, this wonderful book of the Bible bears the imprimatur of the Spirit of God! Let us, therefore, look to Him to teach us the blessed truths which He seeks to reveal in its pages.

Related to the question of the authorship of the last book of the Bible is the date it was penned. The date of A.D. 95 or 96 is generally accepted, and is supported by Clement of Alexandria, Eusebius, and Irenaeus in their writings. Even though the church of the first century did not accept the Apocalypse into the canon of Scripture, it is significant that it was acknowledged throughout Christendom that John, the Beloved Disciple, was the author. It was not until the end of the second century that a concerted effort was made to deny John's authorship. This attempt came about because of the antichiliastic mood of the theologians of the Alexandrian School of Theology who were against the doctrine of the millennial kingdom which is so clearly taught in chapter 20. It is apparent from a careful perusal of the writings of the Alexandrian School, especially those of Dionysius, that they were motivated by their antichiliastic prejudice, and not by a desire to publish the facts of the case.

W H O B A R E R E C O R D

The person who recorded the visions of the Apocalypse is undoubtedly John, the Beloved Disciple, the son of Zebedee and Salome, the brother of James. (Cf. Mark 1:19-20; 15:40; John 13:23; 20:2 and 21:7, 20.) One of the hallmarks of John's writings is his repeated use of the title, "The Word," to identify our Lord. He introduces his Gospel with the words: "In the beginning existed The Word, and The Word (He) was with God, and The Word (He) was God!"

John also identifies Christ as The Word of God in the opening verse of his First Epistle. It is one of his great themes, therefore we are not at all surprised to discover that it is also to be found in the Apocalypse which we are now studying.

OF THE WORD OF GOD

John, then, is simply the amanuensis of Christ, whose humble task it is to bear record of The Word of God. He is, in the final sense, the Scribe, and Jesus (The Word of God) is the Author. Therefore, as John records the things he saw, he simply acts as an accurate Witness, and when he records The Word of God he is assuming the role of Secretary.

The Word of God to which John bare record is Jesus Christ Himself. Our Lord is, Himself, the great Central Theme of the Book. This title ("Word") is the rendering of the Greek term, LOGOS. This word comes into our English language as an ending for such words as proLOGUE and psychoLOGY. It is not just a single utterance, but carries with it the idea of compounded wisdom and the manifestation of truth in

THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

It will be seen immediately that if Jesus Christ is to be identified as "The Word of God," then "the testimony of Jesus Christ" is the Message of God the Word. It is not the word of the son of Mary alone,

but the Word of the Creator Who perfectly indwelt the flesh born of Mary. (John 3:6) We must always be in remembrance of the fact that Jesus was not just a man in whom the Spirit of God dwelt, but that He is the Eternal God who humbly robed Himself in our humanity. When Jesus spoke it was as the Son of God speaking the words of His Father. (John 3:34; 6:45)

B L E S S E D

Satan hates the Word of God. It is not surprising to discover that down through the ages he has managed to persuade lazy Believers that the last book of the Bible is too difficult to understand. He knows full well that the person who reads The Revelation of Jesus Christ intelligently, hearing with the 'ear' of the soul the message of its prophetic utterance, and then goes forth to obey the One who is the True Author of the Book, will know an outpouring of blessing such as he has never known before. Satan would rob you, too, by persuading you that you cannot comprehend the meaning of "the words of this prophecy." Do not believe the Father of Doubt! Believe the Lord Jesus who is The Truth, and who promises a blessing to you if you will but patiently study His revelation, prayerfully looking to the Spirit of The Truth to guide you into an understanding of the message. Then, after your study of a given passage, go forth to obey it. Take that truth already given in verse one, the truth that we are the "slaves" of the Most High. Have we accepted the role assigned us by Christ who said: "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant." (Matthew

11.) God's evaluation of greatness is far different than that of man, is it not? There is none greater than the lowly Jesus, and this in view of the fact that during His entire life He was a servant. He was made to be Messiah by Jehovah because He "took the form of a servant" and was "obedient unto death." Paul says that it was because of His role as Ebed-Yahweh, the Slave of Jehovah, that "God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name": the name "LORD." The most exalted name of God is bestowed upon the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, the one "obedient unto death" who assumed the role of a slave, so that "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow," and every tongue confess that He is LORD to the glory of His Father! (Phil. 2:5-11)

You see my dear friend in Christ it is vital that we be "like Jesus." Correct doctrine must be accepted and put into practice if we are to be "like" Him. We are to copy His "greatness" by copying His role as the Slave of Jehovah, and by being "obedient unto death." He who implicitly and absolutely "obeys" another is the "slave" of that other. There can be no doubt about this. Therefore, if Jesus is really LORD of my life, then I am the SLAVE of His life. If I have truly accepted Him as Master, then I have also accepted my role as His servant. One cannot possibly have Jesus as LORD unless Jesus has him as SLAVE. Furthermore, as we have seen, one cannot know Jesus intimately as "Friend" until he has first of all assumed the role of the Servant of Jesus.

It is a further truth that only those who obey that which Christ reveals to them can rightly be understood to have "ears" that hear in the inner sense. If we are to be "doers and not hearers only," then we must obviously obey, and to obey is to be servant.

Now the promise of Blessing specifically states that the Book must (first of all) be read. Secondly, it is stated that the prophecy must be "heard." We shall discover that to John the word "hear" does not mean simply that the sound waves of someone's voice has vibrated your ear drum, but that you have comprehended what you have read or heard. The third clause of the promised blessing is that you and I "keep" or "obey" the message we find in the Book. Again we see that we are to humbly approach the Lord of this book, eager to hear His Word that we may serve Him. Remember! the message is delivered to the "servants" of Jesus Christ, not to those who seek to act independently of Him. We must believe His words, "without Me ye can do nothing." (John 15:5) Those who are not willing to be the slaves of Jesus labor under the delusion that they are able to do "some" things without Him which will be to God's glory! The fact of the matter is that He is the Source of Revelation, and the Enabler of those who truly "hear" the Word and desire to obey it.

THE BOOK OF REVELATION is not only an unveiling of Jesus Christ, but, also, a book of prophecy. It is a revealing of things which are to come. These things "must" take place. They are to have a literal fulfillment.

The benedictions or "blesings" of the book of Revelation are seven in number. They speak of the 'completeness' of that which our loving God bestows upon His obedient servants. These seven beatitudes are to be found in chapters 1, 14, 16, 19, 20, and 22. The Greek word for "blessed" (MAKARIOS) means "happy" in the sense of complete inner security and contentment. It is an "all is well with my soul" condition of being. Such is the "blessed" servant who stands at attention when His Lord speaks, and then goes forth to obey. (Cf. Matthew 11:28)

THE TIME IS AT HAND

There are two Greek words translated "time" and "times" in the N.T. They are CHRONOS (as in the words chronometer and chronology), and KAIROS. Chronos has to do with measured time and duration of time. Kairos has to do with a time of opportunity, or a time fulfillment.

CHRONOS may refer to a time of short duration, as in Luke 4:5 where we read: "And the devil, taking Him up into an high mountain, shewed unto Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time." In other words the act of showing took only an instant. The duration of time was quite short. CHRONOS, on the other hand is used of extended periods as in Acts 13:18. There we read: "And about the time of forty years suffered He their manners in the wilderness. By this we see that CHRONOS is used of periods of time, long and short, measured and unmeasured.

KAIROS, on the other hand, is the word for time used to describe its content and the opportunity it affords. A most interesting catalog of "times" in the Old Testament is to be found in Ecclesiastes 3:1-8. This list begins with the assertion that "to everything there is a season, and a time to every 'purpose under heaven.'" In the New Testament this relative idea of time is displayed in the conviction that the 'time' towards which the prophets looked has in point of fact arrived in history with the First Advent of Christ Jesus. An example of this is to be seen when Jesus read Isaiah 61:1-2 to a certain point, and declared to His hearers in the little synagogue of Nazareth, "To-day hath this Scripture been fulfilled in your ears." God's "time" (kairos) had at last come. It was a time of fulfilment, known by its content and by the opportunity it afforded those upon whom it had come. To embrace God's "time" then and now is to embrace the opportunity for salvation, and to neglect God's "time" of fulfilment is to invite disaster. (Cf. Isaiah 49:8 and II Corinthians 6:2)

THE WORD USED IN OUR TEXT is 'kairos.' Therefore we recognize that we are not dealing with chronological time, but with realistic time. That which is "at hand" is Time relative to the Rapture and the Second Advent and all that follows. The "season" of the outpouring of the wrath of God upon rebellious man is "at hand."

KAIROS speaks of time in much the same way that we use the word in the phrase, "I will do it when the

time comes," or "I will do it sometime." When a woman's husband tells her that he will do what she wants at some "time," she knows that he has reference to the indefinite future!

The "time" referred to here is indefinite in the sense that God has not chosen to let man know the 'hour' of His outpouring of wrath. There is no way to know the exact date that Christ will rapture His Church, or that He will come with His Bride as the Avenger of the Righteous. The "time" will, however, be recognized by its content, for the "time" which is said to be "at hand," is described in great detail in the Apocalypse.


"AT HAND" is a word with at least two meanings. In the one sense it means "nearby," and, in the other, it means "ready." What we have to determine from the context is whether the time is nearly "upon" the writer, chronologically speaking, or whether it is simply in "readiness." I am personally inclined to believe that it is the latter meaning which is meant to be understood here.

Other instances where the words "at hand" appear are seen in the phrase, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." The context in which this declaration is made seems to mean that the Baptist is saying that all is in "readiness" for the advent of the kingdom. (Matthew 3:2) Had the Jews accepted Jesus as their Messiah, their response to the "season" or "time" would have ushered in the heavenly kingdom. Since they did not, God's "time" simply remains "ready."

We now come to the Salutation in which John records the greetings of the Holy Trinity. John again identifies himself as the amanuensis through whom the message is being channeled. This is important since the validity of the message is heightened by the dependability and importance of the messenger. The messenger is John the Beloved Disciple.

S E V E N

THE NUMBER SEVEN plays an important part in the Apocalypse, for as we shall see the book is carefully designed in a series of seven sevens. They are:

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1. The Seven Beatitudes
 2. The Seven Churches
 3. The Seven Seals
 4. The Seven Trumpets
 5. The Seven Visions
 6. The Seven Bowls
 7. The Seven Dooms

There are also further subdivisions, but these outline the book in a general way. As you can see this is a book with a design, and, like the Gospel of John, it is a design with a purpose, "that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God: and that believing ye might have Life through His name." (John 20:31) As we continue our study it will be quite evident that in the last book of the Bible the purpose is to reveal that "Jesus is LORD" of history as well as all things.

THE NUMBER SEVEN is the Bible number which symbolizes "completeness." It is the equivalent of

the Greek word TELEIOS which is so often translated "perfect," but which means "complete, fully developed, mature, adult, full grown, ripe." (See PERFECT in "Word Keys Which Unlock Scripture" by the author)

Since the number Seven is the most frequently used number to be found in the Apocalypse, it is important that we have a clear mental picture of what is being said symbolically by and through this number. Let us take some examples from the Old Testament, and apply the "key" meaning and see what we come up with. Then we will see if the same "key" unlocks the verses in Revelation, such as the text before us. If our definition of the numerical symbol "7" is correct, it should unlock every passage in which the figure is to be found. If it does not, then we do not have the correct "key." Furthermore, if the key is a perfect fit we shall not have to "force" the lock to open!

Now we have said that "seven" speaks of completeness. It carries with it the idea of fulfilment, or total development. It is related to the idea of the Greek word translated "finished" when our Lord cried out that His work on behalf of man, at Calvary, was a totally completed work. There was nothing left to be done. God's "SEVEN" was written on the work of His spiritual creation at Calvary, just as His "seven" was written with the Sabbath when the work of His physical creation was completed. On the "seventh" day God rested from His labors. The work was "finished." It was "completed." The seven days of creation speaks symbolically of absolute fulfilment.

Not only is the week made complete by the seventh day, but so also we see that the primitive Hebrew year was built in cycles of sevens. To cite an example familiar to all, let us take the distance from the Feast of the Passover until Pentecost: fifty days. The fifty days period was built on a series of seven weeks of seven days, plus the Day of Pentecost. Time does not permit us at this point to analyze the entire year, but the interested student will discover that the primitive Hebrew year was built on cycles of completeness or "sevens."

In the apocalyptic writings the symbol "7" always declares completeness, even as it does in the numerology of dreams. For example, let us take the dream of Pharaoh (in Genesis 41) which was interpreted by Joseph. The cows and the ears of corn spoke of total (that is "complete") drought, and total or "abundant and complete" years of plenty. The one week of years was so completely and totally without crops that it ate up the abundance of grain in the other week of seven years had produced. The symbolic picture is total or "complete" drought versus total or "complete" plenty.

Time fails us to go into the fabulous number of instances in which seven is used symbolically. At the fall of Jericho there were seven priests, seven trumpets, seven days, seven circuits of the wall on the seventh day. The result was "complete" victory for the people of God, gained by the Power of God. Once more we see that the symbolism speaks of the "total" or "finished" work of God who gives the victory.

Now let us take the understanding which we have as to the meaning of the number seven and apply it to the phrase which follows.

CHURCHES WHICH ARE IN ASIA

On the basis of what we have learned about the symbolical meaning of the number 7 we conclude that we are dealing with the "complete" Body of Christ for the Church Age. We are going to be given a complete picture of the Church as Christ sees it from Pentecost until the Rapture. This conclusion will be sustained by that which we discover in our analysis of the seven letters of Jesus to the Church. These are found in the second and third chapters of Revelation.

There were, of course, seven real churches of Christ in the seven cities named previously in our text. The letters apply to them in a very special way, but they also apply to the Church Universal. There were many churches in Asia Minor, but these were selected with the specific purpose in mind of painting a complete portrait of the Church throughout its Age.

Just how complete or "sevened" this portrait is we shall yet see, for it outlines quite effectively the true condition of the Church in our time as well!

These seven Example churches, which portray the earthly Body of Christ in a very complete way, are located in Asia. The Asia here referred to is what



A map showing the location of the Seven Churches

we would now speak of as Asia Minor, and may be located on your map or globe as Turkey. A simple map showing the location of the seven churches, as well as the isle of Patmos, is printed for your convenience on page thirty-four.

Inasmuch as it is the church of Christ upon the earth which is "completely" depicted in the seven-fold portrait to be found in the seven letters, we can expect it to be a sharp photograph which shows the church on earth as it really is — "warts and all." I presume that you realize that the True Church on earth is composed of born-again persons who are still possessed of faults and shortcomings. Any true portrait, therefore, will show the Church as it really is. Furthermore, as we shall see, this portrait not only reveals the constant condition of the church of Christ on earth, but, also, is a prophetic portrait of the assembly of our Lord down through the years from Pentecost until the Rapture.

To make sure that we are oriented in our thinking, let us take a brief moment to establish what we mean when we speak concerning the Church. Actually the Greek word for church or "house of the God" is not to be found in the Bible at all. We get our English word "church" from the German word "kirche" by way of the Scotch word "kirk." (The Greek term is the word "kuriakon.")

The word actually used in the Greek New Testament the word 'ekklesia' meaning "a called-out assembly,

or convened gathering." The True Church on earth is, therefore, an assembly which has been summoned or convened by Jesus Christ. We have been "called out of darkness into His marvelous Light." (I Peter 2:9) We are called together to hear His Word that we might be instructed in our warfare with the Prince of Darkness (Satan) who was once our master, but now is our enemy. Just as the 'ekklesia' or 'assembly' of ancient Athens was made up of full citizens with a right to vote, within the framework of their own laws, so also the Assembly of Christ is made up of born-again Christians whose voices are recognized at the Mercy Seat where their appeals are made.

No denomination, regardless of the name which it is said to have gotten from the Bible, can truthfully pose as "THE" church of Christ. Many man-made organizations have sought to do this down through the years, but a thoughtful reading of Scripture will show that the Jewish religion carried the proper name over the door, and they called their god by the name Jehovah, but the Lord of Glory declared that their father was none other than Satan himself! (John 8:44) Proof that we are the "temple of God" is the Indwelling Presence of The Lord the Spirit. The True Church, therefore, is made up of all persons who have been born of the Holy Spirit, and who have been baptized by Him into the Body of Christ which is His "called-out assembly." (I Corinthians 12:13) In other words, if you are one who has been "born-again" then you are a member of the true assembly of Christ, regardless of the title of your particular denomination.

The Salutation is continued with the characteristic greeting which is also found in the epistles of the apostle Paul: "Grace .. and Peace." These two words contain a glorious message which can be known fully only by those who have made peace with God through His Son, Jesus Christ, and have found unmerited favor at the Mercy Seat of His provision. Let us take just a moment, therefore, to give the basic meaning of the terms.

G R A C E B E U N T O Y O U

Grace means "unmerited favor." Aristotle, in his dictionary, defines the word *charis* as that which is bestowed freely with no expectation of return; an act which finds its only motive in the goodheartedness of the giver. In other words Grace is a gift without any strings attached! When the word *CHARIS* (grace) is taken up by the writers of the New Testament we find it gloriously transcending all former meanings, enlarging upon the idea-boundries which were previously expressed. In the *koine* or common Greek the word was used of a favor bestowed upon a choice friend, but, in the New Testament, we see Grace bestowed upon the enemies as well as the friends of God!

A N D P E A C E

Peace means "cessation of warfare." The unsaved man is at war with God. It is a hopeless conflict, and the outcome will be disastrous unless man accepts peace from God on God's terms. The terms are the denial of Satan as "lord", and the acceptance of Jesus

Christ as LORD and Saviour. God's peace terms are offered for man's sake, for man is headed for eternal torment in the Lake of Fire if he persists in his anti-God way.

You may well wonder why the Salutation should contain the kind of greeting that actually says, "May unmerited favor and cessation of hostility be yours!" After all, we Christians are under Grace and we have made our peace with God by accepting His Son as our LORD and Saviour. This is true, but it is also a fact that many a born-again Believer lives as though it were not. For example, do you ever have carnal desires and wishes unto the satisfaction of the flesh? Then you have not "ceased your hostility" against God for Paul declares that "the carnal mind is enmity with God," (Romans 8:7) It is a fact that you cannot have total peace unless you have total surrender to Jesus as LORD. As long as you entertain attitudes and desires which are contrary to the Spirit of God, you are totally surrendered. His command is "Surrender, or you cannot have the perfect peace that passes all understanding."

One might put it this way. Our inner man is a sort of kingdom and we are privileged to determine who shall occupy it. There are spirits that dwell in that kingdom which are antagonistic to the Spirit of God, and we cannot know inner tranquility until they have been cast out. These spirits, in many Christians, are legion. You know some of them by name and perhaps by experience. They are hatred, bitterness, envy,

jealousy, lust, anxiety, and so on. We must admit that these 'spirits' are not of God, so they must be of the flesh or worse! Only as all attitudes and all desires which are contrary to the mind of Christ are confessed to be sin, can we expect to be purged of that which brings lack of peace. Peace results from putting the entire inner being under the rule of the Holy Spirit.

HIM WHICH IS - WAS - IS TO COME

The Salutation does not come from John. He is just the secretary to whom the message is dictated, that he may transcribe it and send it on to the church as a whole. The greeting is from the Eternal God who has always existed, does now exist, and always shall exist. These three tenses form the name of Jehovah, the One who spoke to Moses from the burning bush as the great I AM. This name, translated "I AM," is a compound made up of the three tenses of the verb "to be." This is a way of saying that the Speaker is the God of eternity past, of the moment in which we now exist, and of the eternity future. He is the time-less One who has neither beginning nor end.

We see, then, that the God of the book of Revelation is one and the same as the Jehovah of the Old Testament. The One who spoke to Moses is the very One who here addresses the Church with the assurance that His unmerited favor rests upon those with whom He is at peace.

We see something of the immutability of God in this identification of the Speaker as He who "is, was, and is to come." The writer of Hebrews describes the blessed Second Person of the Holy Trinity in much the same fashion: "the same yesterday, and today, and forever." (13:8) This immutability of the Name of Deity speaks of His absolute resistance to change for He is the "Father of lights, with whom is no variable-ness, neither shadow of turning." (James 1:17b) The Speaker is the Eternal One who declares in Malachi 3:6, "I AM the LORD; I change not."

It should be noted that "He Who comes" is an Old Testament title for the Jewish Messiah. The reference in Psalm 118:26 is identified in Matthew 21:9 as pertaining to Jesus the Christ. On Palm Sunday the crowds are seen strewing branches and crying: "Hosannah to the Son of David: Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD." However, the Coming One cannot be Messiah without a people to deliver. As such He is not only "He who comes," but, also, "He who has come" and "He who will come." In a very real sense the "last day" has been present with us from the moment of the First Advent, but it cannot be manifested in its fulness until the Second Coming.

It is perfectly natural that the name of Jehovah should be introduced at this point. The Father is identified as the Eternally Existing One Who Comes, and so is the Holy Spirit and the Son, for it is to be seen in this passage that it is the Holy Trinity who speaks the word of Salutation and Benediction.

We see by this amazing title, which is really a form of the O.T. name for Jehovah, that this final book of the Bible has to do with the Person who is coming as well as with the events connected with His parousia. When He made His first Advent it was as the Suffering Servant of Jehovah, and the world took little notice of Him. When He comes again, however, it will be as a triumphant Conqueror.

THE "SEVEN SPIRITS" who are before the throne are easily identified if we will remember that the number 'seven' is the symbol of that which is 'complete.' If we will but apply the Word Key to this picturesque "lock" we will discover that it is a dramatic way of speaking of the Holy Spirit in all of His perfection or completeness.

For example, let us take our Word Key for the number seven. That 'key', remember, signifies perfection in the sense of 'completeness.' Turn in your Bible, if you will, to Zechariah 3:9 where The Stone is described as having "seven eyes." If seven signifies perfection, then whoever the "Stone" symbolizes is One who "sees and knows everything." The Stone or Rock is an O.T. name for Jehovah, and, in the N.T. it is the name of God the Son. (Deuteronomy 32:3-4 and I Corinthians 10:4) Symbolically, then, we are being told that absolutely nothing escapes the gaze of Jehovah. In Zechariah 4:7 we are told: "those seven, they are the eyes of the LORD, which run to and fro through the whole earth." Now this does not mean that Jehovah has seven eyes in His head. Surely that

is obvious to anyone. "God is Spirit," and does not possess physical eyes like man. This anthropomorphism is used symbolically to express the truth that God does "see," and that His gaze penetrates beneath the surface to the very core of man's being. Nothing escapes His notice. He is the Omniscient One who is described so beautifully in the Collect for Purity —

"Almighty God,
unto Whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from Whom no secrets are hid ..."

Before Him we are as a transparent glass, in spite of our attempts to "cover up" and hide our sins. He knows every desire that surges within our inner being and every thought entertained in our minds. There is no such thing as a "secret" before the Almighty One who searches the heart of humanity.

In like manner the symbolic term, "seven spirits" signifies the completeness of the Spirit of God. He is lacking in nothing. He who is known as the Holy Spirit is the blessed Third Person of the Trinity, and, as such, He is the Eternal God blessed forever. God is lacking in nothing. He is Perfect. He is Complete in every way. He is the epitomy of all that the number seven signifies. Hence the symbolic use of the phrase "the seven spirits" who are before the throne.

Just as the Son was "sent" by the Father, taking unto Himself the role of EbedYahweh (the Slave of Jehovah) so the Holy Spirit is declared to be "sent" by the Son, and is seen serving Him and bearing witness to Him.

When the Lord Jesus Christ declared: "He who is greatest among you shall be your servant," He was enunciating one of heaven's principles, and, at the same time declaring Himself to be the greatest One in their midst. When He came it was not to be served but to serve, not to be ministered unto but to minister unto others. He did not count "equality with God" something to be clutched after, but He humbled Himself by assuming the role of a servant. This is why the Father has exalted Him above all of creation, and has given Him the position of "greatest," even to the bestowal of the title LORD, the "name above every other name." (Philippians 2:5-11 and Mark 10:45)

It is not surprising, therefore, to see God the Holy Spirit assuming the role of Servant of Christ, ministering to the Church in the book of Acts and in the epistles. Hence, in our text, we read that He is "before" and not "upon" the throne. This position of One who serves does not take away from His glory any more than the role of Jesus as Ebed Yahweh takes away from the glory that is His. The Holy Spirit is just as much God as the Father is God, even though He serves, as is God the Son. In fact, it is the perfect reflection of the will of the Father which is seen in the Son that most firmly declares that He is the Genuine Son and not a Pretender! So, also, the complete and willing subordination of the Spirit to the Son is His most eloquent testimony that He is, indeed, the Spirit of Christ. As He proceeds from the Father it is His delight to testify concerning the Son, even as Jesus said He would. (John 15:26)

The "throne" signifies the place of rule and may be either a seat of judgment or mercy, depending upon the approach. If God is approached in the blessed name of Jesus, with faith in the efficacy of His shed blood, the Throne of God becomes the Mercy Seat. If, however, man refuses to come by the Way of God's provision, rejecting His offer of grace, then he will find only a seat of wrath and Judgment. The Way of mercy is Jesus Christ in whom is grace abounding. The way of wrath is the law in which there is condemnation, since by works is no man ever justified. The throne of God is a Seat of Mercy for the Elect, but it will one day be a Seat of Condemnation for those who have rejected the one who is "the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world." (I John 2:2)

AND FROM JESUS

At this point we perceive that the Salutation is from the Holy Trinity. The Name of the Father, Jehovah, is first declared in verse four in the descriptive title: "which is, and which was, and which is to come." In the same verse we are greeted by the Holy Spirit in

all of His completeness and perfection. Here we are greeted by the Son of God in a five-fold description of the one Who is the channel of grace. This salutation, then, is from the Triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit: One God, blessed forever. Amen. (For a detailed study of the Holy Trinity, see the articles on GOD in volume 2 of "Word Keys Which Unlock Scripture" by the author.)

Many persons do not realize that the names JESUS and JOSHUA are one and the same. Both names mean "Jehovah is salvation." Jesus is derived from the Greek spelling, and Joshua is derived from the Hebrew spelling. Jeshua is another way of spelling the same name in the Old Testament. Other forms of this blessed name, not so easily recognized in the English Bible, are Jeshaiah, Josias, and Isaiah.

The old Hebrew name "Joshua" was first given to a young man by the name of Hosea (pronounced Hoshea) the son of Nun. He was selected to be the successor of Moses. To the name Hoshea (which means "salvation,") was added the prefix "Jah" (which stands for Jehovah.) This made Jah-Hoshea, which contracted to Joshua. It was a banner name which declared the basic truth that deliverance is of the LORD, and not of man.

Our blessed Lord was named "Joshua" (or as we say, "Jesus,") because He was sent to save His people from their sins. (Matthew 1:21) Just as Joshua of old was the Captain and Deliverer (Saviour) of the

people of God, leading them to physical victory over a physical enemy, into a physical land of promise; so the Captain of our Salvation leads us to spiritual victories over a spirit-enemy, into a heavenly land of Promise.

"CHRIST" is the transliteration of the Greek word for "annointed," and is the equivalent of the Hebrew participle from which we derive the title, "Messiah." In the Old Testament the word is used of prophets, priests, kings, and the people of God. Each of these dramatically expresses spiritual truth concerning the Lord Jesus and His Church. Jesus is "that prophet" of whom Moses spoke in Deuteronomy 18:15-19. Holy men of old spoke as they were moved by the Spirit of God, but Jesus speaks for God as God. Our Lord is also God's High Priest, as we read in Hebrews 3:1. However, inasmuch as He is eternal, His priesthood is after the order of Melchizedek. He needs no successor, and the priesthood of Aaron with its succeeding generations, was but a shadow of Jesus the True Priest who was to come. Kings were also annointed as a dramatic portrayal of the One who would one day come in the clouds of glory as "King of kings, and Lord of lords." (Deuteronomy 10:17, Daniel 2:47 and Revelation 19:16) Many do not realize that the People of God are spoken of as the Lord's "annointed" in the Old Testament. The poetic parallelism of Habakkuk shows us this truth: "Thou didst go forth for the salvation of Thy People, for the salvation of Thine annointed." In the New Testament we see that the People of God who are annointed with the Holy Spirit

are those who have been placed "in Christ" by the blessed Third Person of the Trinity. (I Cor. 12:13) Jesus is the Christ ... the Messiah ... the Anointed One of God. (See CHRIST in volume 3 of WKWUS)

The normal order for mentioning the three blessed persons of the Holy Trinity is: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In our text, in verses four and five, however, the Son is mentioned last (rather than second.) I take it that the reason for this is that He is to be the Grand Theme of all that follows throughout the Apocalypse.

THE FAITHFUL WITNESS

The three-fold office of Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King is again lifted up in the titles of Jesus as He is here spoken of as "witness," "first begotten," and "prince." Like a prophet a witness speaks that which he has seen and heard. As we shall see the priestly work of offering up a sacrifice is to be found in the term "first begotten." "Prince" is obviously related to the idea of kingship.

The word "witness" is, in the Greek, MARTUR or martyr. The term originally meant to bear testimony to that which one had personally observed or heard. It was often used in a forensic sense of someone who testified in a court of law concerning first-hand information, as in Matthew 18:16. (Cf. Deuteronomy 17:6 and II Corinthians 13:1) However, as the early Christians bore testimony to their faith in Jesus as the Son

of God and Messiah of the Jews, they were often slain because of their "witness." As a result the word was soon associated with the idea of dying for one's faith.

The first "martyr" of the Christian faith was, of course, our Lord. He is here called "the faithful witness." The word "faithful" is the translation of 'pistos,' and speaks of one who is faithful in the discharge of a duty, or the administration of a trust. Bishop Trench cites Richard of St. Victor as saying: "A faithful witness, because He gave faithful testimony concerning all things which were testified to by Him in the world. A faithful witness, because whatever He heard from the Father, He faithfully made known to His disciples. A faithful witness, because He taught the way of God in truth, neither did He care for any one nor regard the person of men. A faithful witness, because He announced condemnation to the reprobate and salvation to the elect. A faithful witness, because He confirmed by miracles the truth which He taught in words. A faithful witness, because He denied not, even in death, the Father's testimony to Himself. A faithful witness, because He will give testimony in the day of judgment concerning the works of the good and of the evil."

As the "faithful witness" our Lord is the One who was absolutely true to the testimony of God, even when He knew that it would terminate in the agony of the cross. His testimony was based on His complete confidence in the Father's love, and in His perfect comprehension of the nature of God.

As the "faithful witness" whose testimony is to be trusted one hundred percent, Jesus is seen as "that Prophet of whom Moses spake." In Deuteronomy 18 it is to be seen that the One whom God promises to raise up is to bear the kind of testimony that must be accepted, or else the hearer will be cut off from the people of God. (Cf. John 8:24)

THE FIRST BEGOTTEN

The term "first begotten" is a well known Messianic title, as may be seen in Psalm 89:27, viewing the verse in its context. The Psalmist sings that Jehovah has declared: "I also will make Him My firstborn, the highest of the kings of the earth." ("First begotten" and "first born" are synonymous in Scripture.) We shall see that Jesus Christ is destined to be King over all kings, and Lord over all lords.

Throughout the O.T. it is taught that the prototokos or "firstborn" holds a special place of esteem and privilege in the household. Primogeniture is based upon the Mosaic law which affirms that every male which first opens his mother's womb belongs to the LORD. As a result the "first begotten" holds the place of pre-eminence.

As the first strength of the father, the first begotten became the next head of the tribal family, and was responsible for its continuance and welfare. As such he acted with recognized authority, assumed greater

responsibility, and received preferential treatment. His was the 'birthright' which gave him the privilege of the father's special blessing, as well as a double portion of the inheritance. By this term, therefore, Jesus Christ is declared to be the Heir Pre-Emminent of Jehovah!

OF THE DEAD

It is the resurrection of Christ from among the dead which establishes His relationship to God as the Messiah of prophecy. Although it is true that certain persons in the O.T. and the N.T. were "raised" from among the dead, in the sense of resuscitation, there are none who were resurrected. These others simply had their physical life extended, only to return to the realm of the dead. They did not rise from among the dead ones, ascending into heaven, as did our Lord.

The "dead" referred to in this verse are those who were in the prison house of sheol, or hades. When Christ Jesus rose from the grave, ascending up on high into the presence of the Father, He took with Him all who were in that section of the grave known as "Paradise." (Cf. II Corinthians 12:1-4) The time of the transfer is indicated in Ephesians 4:8-10 where Paul says of Christ: "When He ascended up on high He led captivity captive..." (See HELL — the grave, in volume one of WKWUS). Only the wicked dead are now to be found in Sheol (Heb.) or Hades (Gk.) where they are imprisoned, awaiting the Day of Judgment at

the Great White Throne. The Greek word translated "dead" is NEKROS. These "dead" are the departed spirits who have not yet been resurrected bodily. It was from among the spirits of the departed that our Lord was resurrected bodily. He was the first to "open the womb" of the Grave, and is, therefore, the "first begotten" or "first born" from among the dead. In Acts 26:23 we read: "that Christ should suffer, and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead ..." (Cf. Acts 2:24)

We must remember that there are three specific resurrections. (1) The Resurrection of Christ, (2) the resurrection of the Saints, and (3) the resurrection of the unbelieving or wicked dead. These all take place at different times. At the present time only the Lord has been resurrected in the full sense.

THE PRINCE OF THE KINGS OF THE EARTH

The Greek word translated "prince" is ARCHON, a term that is used in the LXX for a national, local or tribal leader. We make use of the first four letters of this Greek word (ARCH) as a prefix to such words as "arch enemy" meaning one's leading enemy. The fallen Cherub (Satan) is the Arch Angel or "leading angel" of the fallen angels, the enemies of God. In like manner the angel Michael is the Arch Angel, or "leader" of the holy angels in the hosts of heaven. In other words "prince" here refers to the fact that our Lord is the "LEADER," or the One who is in author-

ity over all earthly monarchs. This, at first, may seem contradictory, for we know that the Scriptures teach that Satan is the ruling power in the world at the moment. In this connection it must be recognized that he is a usurper, and his rule as "The Power of Darkness," is only tolerated. He is being used by the Almighty to accomplish a predetermined objective. As a creature he is limited in his powers and actions by the Creator, such as his "sifting" of Job. His rebellion against the LORD is being turned by God to the advantage of the Creator and the saints. When his rebellion is no longer a useful tool in the perfecting of the saints he will be cast into the Lake of Fire. In our study we shall see that one of the purposes of the Apocalypse is to reveal that Jesus Christ is the rightful "prince" or "ruler" over all other monarchs, that He is "King of kings and Lord of lords." As such He will one day come from heaven to take control of that which is rightfully His. (Cf. Revelation 11:15)

UNTO HIM THAT LOVED US

This glorious Doxology, which terminates the Salutation which we have been studying, begins with the impassioned declaration, "Unto Him who loves us ...". It would seem that John's cup of ecstatic joy is so full to overflowing that he simply 'must' raise his voice in praise of his precious Lord and Saviour! The context shows that the personal pronoun refers to God the Son, although it is true that the Father also "so loved

the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting Life." (Cf. I John 4:9-10)

The amazing love of God the Son is to be seen in His perfect willingness to drink of the "cup" of death eternal in order that those who place their faith in Him might have Life eternal. The focal point of this love is to be seen at Calvary, for the proof of His love for us is manifested in His laying down of His life, as He taught, "for His friends." (Cf. John 15:13) It is obvious that this is more than an heroic gesture as some falsely suggest. This is the display of the love of God that moved Him to provide for man the "propitiation for our sins" which we could not possibly provide for ourselves. In his first epistle John writes: "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His son to be the propitiation for our sins! (I John 4:10)

WASHED US FROM OUR SINS



Before we proceed any further it would be well for us to point out that the better Greek manuscripts read "loves" (present tense) in place of "loved" (past) and "loosed" rather than "washed." (In Greek the only difference between "loosed" and "washed" is the letter "o." The idea would be, therefore, "Unto Him who loves us (continuously), and who has loosed us from our sins in His own blood." Since Christ has indeed

"loosed" or released us from our sin, destroying its power over us, the idea here would be that the blood of the Lord Jesus has freed us from the claim that sin once had over us. (Cf. Romans 6:7-14)

IN HIS OWN BLOOD

That this love of Christ for His Bride is expressed perfectly at Calvary, when He made Himself to be the Offering of Propitiation, may be seen in the words, "and loosed us from our sins in His own blood..." The death of Christ, God's lamb, is both the declaration and proof of God's love. Therefore these two clauses stand related to one another as Cause and Effect. This may be seen in such passages as Romans 5:8, Galatians 2:20, and I John 3:16. Let us take these passages and diagram them, for the sake of clarity.

Romans 5:8

- Cause - "God commendeth His love toward us"
- Effect - "in that Christ died for us"

Galatians 2:20

- Cause - "Who loved me"
- Effect - "and gave Himself for me"

I John 3:16

- Cause - "Hereby know we The Love" (Gk.)
- Effect - "because He laid down His life for us"

We shall discover, as we proceed with our study of the Apocalypse, that there is an amazing emphasis upon the sacrificial character of the death of Christ in this last book of the Bible which is wholly unprecedented in Scripture. The great theme that is symbolically 'whispered' in the O. T. through the Levitical sacrifices; re-stated by the prophets in such passages as Isaiah 53; now begins to swell to a great crescendo around the title "The Lamb." This appellation appears again and again (some 28 times) in Revelation, gathering momentum and magnitude, until there can be no doubt but that the message is that the Lamb of God is none other than GOD THE LAMB! With this "unveiling" of Jesus comes the very startling realization that Abraham's answer to the query of Isaac, "Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?" is to be taken literally! You will remember, I trust, that the Patriarch's answer was:

"GOD WILL PROVIDE HIMSELF ... A LAMB!"
(Genesis 22:8)

It is the Lamb who loves us! It is the Lamb who has loosed us from our sins! It is the Lamb who gave Himself for us! It is the "precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" that was shed for us. (I Peter 1:19) Oh, indeed, "Worthy is The Lamb who was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood!" (Cf. Rev. 5:9-14) Oh how our hearts should thrill with joy as we think on Him who loved us and gave Himself for us that we might reign with Him one day in Glory!

The outcome of the wondrous love of God the Father and God the Son was our Lord's vicarious sacrifice at Calvary. The outcome of the Sacrifice was unlimited blessing for the saints, for He has thereby made us to be "fellow citizens with the saints, and of the Household of God." (Ephesians 2:13-19)

AND HATH MADE US KINGS

The Greek word here translated "kings" is actually in the singular number and should be rendered "kingdom." The title of "King" is given only to Christ, and never to the individual, in the N.T. Instead we are spoken of as a people who comprise a kingdom.

Just as there is an echo of Exodus and the Passover in the words "loosed us from our sins in His own blood," so also the idea of a priestly kingdom is to be found in that book of deliverance. In Exodus 19:6 we find that God promises Moses that the Israelites will be "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation." John is saying, therefore, that the Christian who has been "loosed from his sins" by the blood of the Paschal Lamb, fulfills that prophecy. He is not alone in this. Peter also writes that we are a "chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people." Christ is the King who has "called us out of darkness" that He might form us into a Kingdom of Light. As subjects under the Great King we form the kingdom, and in the Millennum we shall reign with Him. (Cf. Revelation 20:6 and Daniel 7:13-14)

We were once subjects of the Prince of Darkness in that day when we were yet "dead in trespasses and sins." (Ephesians 2:1) We were transferred from that kingdom, by means of the New Birth, when we trusted in Jesus Christ, accepting Him as LORD and Saviour. "The Power of Darkness" is one of the titles for Satan. Paul refers to him and to the wonderful miracle of the New Birth in Colossians 1:13, saying that the Father "hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins". Because man is born blind, spiritually, he is in total spiritual darkness until the scales of darkness are washed from his eyes by the Spirit of Christ. Until the moment of the new birth, when he is enabled to "see the kingdom," he is under the dictatorship of God's enemy. The KINGDOM into which the born-again-ones are translated is made up of all who are found to be "in Christ." In short, those who compose the Body of Christ, form the kingdom of priests spoken of in our text.

AND PRIESTS



Where the word "kingdom" describes the body of the redeemed collectively, the word "priests" indicates their position individually. The Church is the "royal priesthood," according to I Peter 2:9, which fulfills the promise of God to Israel, "Ye shall be a KINGDOM OF PRIESTS." (Exodus 19:6)

The story of the Priesthood of Believers, and their relationship to the High Priest and the Kingdom, is beautifully portrayed in the Tabernacle of Witness in the Pentetuch. As one enters the Gate of the Court he sees the New Birth, and after that the entire story is concerned with the "kingdom" and the "priesthood." (For a detailed study of this particular matter the serious student is referred to the author's small book "THE GOSPEL TENT.")

UNTO GOD AND HIS FATHER

This phrase, "unto God and His Father," is a very awkward rendering of the Greek. Nowadays we would say, "unto His God and Father." As in the case of the Fourth Gospel written by John, God is the Father of Jesus Christ in a unique and special way. Similar passages that express the relationship of God to Jesus as Father are Romans 15:6 and II Corinthians 1:3. There the epexegetical "and" is rendered "even", as it should be here. (Cf. Ephesians 1:3)

TO HIM BE GLORY

The word translated "glory" is the Greek term DOXOS which finds its way into our word "doxology." In the Scripture the word always means "praise," so it is not surprising to see that the Doxology we sing in church begins, "Praise God!" The word "glory," in the Greek text, is preceded by the definite article,

"The Glory" which belongs to Jesus has reference to The Presence of Jehovah which was veiled by the cloud which hovered over the Tabernacle of Witness. "The Glory of God" is a term used to express that which man is able to apprehend of The Presence of God on earth. John uses DOXA ('glory') in the opening chapter of his gospel to express this truth, when he cries: "We beheld His GLORY, as of the only begotten of the Father." (John 1:14) A direct glimpse of The Glory would be blinding, so, in the O.T. it is veiled in the cloud, and in the N.T. it is veiled in the humanity of our Lord. In His great High Priestly prayer in the 17th chapter of John's gospel, Christ is heard to say: "And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own Self, with the DOXA which I had with Thee before the world existed." The synonymous parallelism of the passage indicates that the DOXA or 'glory' is synonymous with the "Self" or Person of the Father. In other words, in Jesus we behold the very Presence of Jehovah, tabernacled in human form.

The Hebrew word for GLORY (Kabod) has a primary meaning depicting weight and substance in the sense of a wealthy man. Such a person's kabod would be manifest in his external appearance and bearing. Such obvious wealth and dignity would naturally command respect, admiration, and honor from his fellow man, and this, too, was referred to as his 'glory' or kabod. Hence the ideas of weight, substance, wealth and nobility of bearing contribute to its meaning on the spiritual level. This word picture used in this way of earthly glory, under the leading of the Holy

Spirit, is used by Ezekiel to describe the Glory of Jehovah in his vision. Describing the Majesty seated on His throne, the prophet wrote: "This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of God." (Ezekiel 1:28) The outstanding characteristic of the description in Ezekiel is the effulgence or brilliance of The Presence, as of a flood of radiant light.

In the book of Exodus we find the Glory or Presence described as "like a devouring fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel." In the previous verse this overwhelming radiance is declared to be "the GLORY of Jehoavh" who "called unto Moses out of the midst of the cloud." (Ex. 24:16-17). The Presence of the cloud, blazing forth light as a "devouring fire" established the fact of Jehovah's presence on the mount, and, later, in the sanctuary. (Cf. Exodus 29:43 and 40:34)

Maintaining the idea of wealth, honor, and dignity, the Psalmist sings "The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the people see His glory!" the very opulence of God's creation bears testimony to the glory of God! Every fabulous sunset is a veiled manifestation of the DOXA of Jehovah, splashed upon the canvas of heaven for all to see. The microcosm and the macrocosm alike declare the wealth of the Creator of the all things.

In the eschatological utterance of Isaiah 24:23, describing that Day in which Jehovah shall punish the demonic hosts as well as the imprisoned spirits in

hades ("the pit"), it is said that the reign of Jehovah shall put the sun and moon to shame. We see this even more openly declared in Revelation 21:23 which says: "And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the DOXAS of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the Lamp thereof."

The blending of the actual and eschatological elements of the Glory of Jehovah are to be found with dynamic certainty in the Person of Jesus Christ. It was the DOXA of the One who dwells in unapproachable Light which burst forth in measure upon the lowly shepherds to announce the birth of The Lord of The Glory. (Cf. Luke 2:9 and I Timothy 6:16) When the Word Incarnate pitched the tabernacle of His flesh in the midst of the camp of Israel, men apprehended The Presence in Him. (John 1:14) That same 'glory' or outpouring of overwhelming brilliance struck down Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus, causing him to cry out: "Lord! What wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6)

Throughout the gospel of John in particular, and the N.T. in general, Christ is presented as the manifestation of the Glory of God promised in Isaiah 40:5. His miracles* ("signs") are a revelation of His doxa, and it is affirmed that the Glory of the Father manifested in Christ is given to His disciples. (John 17:22) In His disciples the Divine Presence, the Holy Spirit, is resident in the tabernacle of flesh, therefore the Lord says: "And the Glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are

one: I in them and Thou in Me..." It will be seen by a careful examination of the High Priestly prayer in the seventeenth chapter of John that it is dominated by the idea of DOXA, and there can be no doubt but that the entire Passion of our Lord is His 'glorification.' (John 17:1) This is why the theme of the Lamb is to figure so prominently in the Apocalypse relative to His Glory. John makes it quite clear that Jesus goes to the cross as a Victorious Monarch to be crowned King of kings and Lord of lords, and not as a helpless victim of circumstances, or a martyr for a good cause as some have suggested. It is this moment of seeming defeat and humiliation that the utter Glory of the One "who for our sakes became poor" is made plain!

Sometimes the Hebrew rabbinical term SHEKINAH is used to stress the Presence of Jehovah with men. It was used in post-Biblical times by Jewish teachers to refer to the manifestation of The Glory to Moses, when Jehovah appeared to him in the blazing thorn bush. It was a frightening fire which did not burn or consume the bush, but which was nevertheless very real. Here we see intimations that the One who is "like a Refiner's Fire" will cause to burn (without consuming) His enemies, for all of eternity, as they are exposed directly to His Presence.

AND DOMINION FOREVER AND EVER

Inasmuch as there is a constant relationship to be seen between the "glory" and the "cloud," it will not

surprise you at all to observe that the references to the Second Coming inevitably speak of the Presence, the Glory, and the clouds all "in the same breath."

This Doxology which forms our text begins to draw to a close with the declaration that to Jesus belongs the Glory and "dominion forever and ever." This phrase, related as it is to the 'saints' and to a 'kingdom,' cause us to think immediately of Daniel 7:13, where it is declared that the Ancient of Days (Jehovah) gave to the Son of Man (Jesus) "dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him: His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and His kingdom shall not be destroyed."

It is vitally important that we remember that the Kingdom of God as it is presented in the teaching and work of Jesus is basically God's, and not ours. It is not built up by men, and ushered in by the devoted labors of the Church. It is a Kingdom which God Himself gives to His Son, over which His Beloved One will rule with His Bride (the Church.) Although the Kingdom of God is "in your midst" as Luke 17:21 may be more accurately rendered, it is not realized except by those who have yielded themselves subject to Christ the King. Furthermore, it will not be completely realized in the proper sense until that Day when all of the "kingdom of the world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ." (Revelation 11:15) It is a kingdom which God 'delivers' unto His Son, saying: "Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make

Thine enemies Thy footstool." (Psalm 110:1) At no point does the Word of God teach that the Kingdom of God will be ushered in by the labors of the Church, but, on the contrary, that it is given by God. It is a God-given kingdom which is entered into by the subjects of Christ through the gate of the New Birth. (Cf. John 3:5)

A M E N !



The word "Amen" is a Hebrew word which means "Truth." It has been transliterated into Greek and modern languages, such as English. ("Transliterate" means to take a word in a foreign language and to carry it over almost literally into one's own tongue.) This word which sounds and spells just about the same in English as it is in Hebrew and Greek is often rendered "verily" in the KJV of the Bible. "Verily" is brought into our language from the Latin word "veritas" which also means "truth."

In the liturgy of the Old Testament we find the word "Amen" used in the sense that we, today, might say, "That's the Truth!" For example, in Deuteronomy 27:9-26 we find the record of the antiphonal response of the people to the shout of the Levites, at Mounts Ebal and Gerizim, in the Liturgy of the Curse and the Amen. There the response would suggest that not only is there an affirmation of Truth, but, also an affirmation of agreement. As in the case of the priestly oath-taking of Nehemiah 5:12-13 there is the idea of

"We agree! So let it be!" The liturgical usage, then, expresses assent to a statement, a prayer, or a desire. (Cf. I Corinthians 14:16) When it is used in the description of God Himself, as in Isaiah 65:16, it is to affirm that He is the "God of Truth." He is the One who affirms His own Word on the ground that He is The Highest. (Cf. I Corinthians 1:18-20) *

BEHOLD! HE COMETH

"Behold, He cometh" speaks, here, of the Second Coming in terms of what is often referred to as the 'second stage' of His Advent. The 'first stage' of His Second Coming is the Rapture. We know that the reference in the text at hand is not to the coming of our Lord for His Bride, the Church, for it is declared that "every eye shall see Him," including those who "pierced Him." This will not be true of the Rapture, but it is literally true of His coming in judgment.

The word "behold" is extremely interesting because it is the imperative form of the verb "to see." In the Apocalypse it is always used in the middle voice in the Greek text, which gives it the meaning of "See for yourself!" In other words take a good look at what is being said or revealed, for it is for your benefit!

In a very real sense this verse (7) is the Key Verse of the entire book of Revelation, inasmuch as the events listed in it compose almost the entire contents of the Apocalypse!

This verse, therefore, gives us an example of the Law of Antecedent Mention. All of history is related to preceding causes and succeeding effects. In order to properly understand the End we must rightly relate it to those things which brought it about. Since prophecy is merely history written in advance, and since history is simply the sum total of succeeding events, it is customary for the prophet to state the things which lead up to a given moment or event. A good example of this is to be seen in the revelation given Daniel concerning the end times. He begins to explain the matter to Nebuchadnezzar by beginning with the king himself. (Daniel 2:28-29; 37-38) Then he moves through the reign of intervening Gentile powers to prophesy their final destruction in the End. In like manner, here in verse seven, we see the Law of Antecedent (or Prophetic) Mention in motion. The future event is spoken of as already "at hand" in the sense that it is already in the process of being fulfilled by the Almighty who pre-determines what shall be.

The Coming of the Son of Man (a title which Jesus applied to Himself, and is found nearly 100 times in the Gospels,) is reflected in the Messianic title, "He Who Cometh." In a very real sense our Lord is the "constantly coming One" as the title implies, for He has ever been coming in blessing and judgment. Still it must be recognized that there will be a 'Day' in which His stored up wrath will burst forth, and that aspect of His 'coming' will be over and finished. As we look at this verse (7) and toward the Day of which it speaks, we are viewing the End before it takes

place in terms of history present. By means of its antecedent mention, however, we are prepared for "that which shall be" as well as for that which is.

WITH CLOUDS

When the Lord Jesus comes again it will be in "like manner" as the apostles saw Him go into heaven, that is bodily with clouds. (Cf. Acts 1:9-11) His parousia "with the clouds of heaven" is mentioned just once in the Old Testament. In Daniel 7:13 we read: "I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of Man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of Days ..." As we contrast this verse, in context, with the seven times that the coming of the Son of Man is mentioned in the New Testament, we are forcibly struck with the fact that it follows the period of Jacob's trouble known as the Great Tribulation. For example, in the Olivet Discourse recorded in Matthew 24:29-30 we read: "Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the sun be darkened, and the moon shall not give her light, and the stars shall fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens shall be shaken: and then shall appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven; and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory." (Please observe that verse 29 begins with the words "Immediately AFTER The TRIBULATION." Then, what takes place "immediately after" the Tribulation? The Son of Man will be seen "coming in the

clouds of heaven with power and great glory." In other words the Second Advent of Christ as Conquering King will follow the Great Tribulation. Of this there can be no doubt, as we shall be able to show conclusively (from Scripture) in the course of our study of the Apocalypse.

Some writers quote ancient sources as saying that the later Jews actually referred to the Messiah as "the cloud man." This was based on their understanding that the Son of Man in the vision of Daniel 7:13 was none other than the longed-for Messiah.

The High Priest, Caiaphas, who interrogated Jesus during the night in which our Lord was betrayed, understood who the "cloud man" was. When he commanded Jesus to openly declare whether He was the Messiah, the Son of God, or not, our Lord answered: "Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of The Power, and coming in the clouds of heaven." (Matthew 26:63-64) Then the high priest ripped his vestments, crying, "He hath spoken blasphemy!" (See article on BLASPHEMY in WKWUS by the author.) By identifying Himself as the Son of Man who "cometh with the clouds" in the vision of Daniel, our Lord answered the question of Caiaphas in the affirmative. It was an open declaration from Jesus that He is the Son of God, the Messiah of the Jew, and it was more than the son of the Evil One could bear. (Cf. John 8:39-44 with John 5:18 and 10:36) Under oath before the high priest, our Lord affirmed "plainly" that He was the "One Who Comes", and Caiaphas and

the other rulers of the Jews determined that He was a blasphemer of Jehovah, and worthy of death.

A word to the student of Scripture at this time concerning the so-called "little words" **which** often hold the 'key' to unlocking a passage. When reading verses dealing with the Second Coming of our Lord be sure to note whether it is "FOR" the saints, or "WITH" the saints. At the Rapture our Saviour will come **FOR** the saints, to take them to heaven for the Marriage Supper which takes place during the time of the Great Tribulation, which is on earth. Then, at the end of the 7 years of Jacob's Trouble, Christ will come **WITH** the saints to set up the Millennial reign. Obviously, He will have to come **FOR** the saints before He can possibly come **WITH** them! Furthermore it will be seen that they are caught up in the clouds to be with the Lord in the air, at the Rapture. Only at the second stage of the Parousia is it said that He will come "with the clouds."

EVERY EYE SHALL SEE HIM

The poet, Francis Thompson, has observed that:

some have eyes, and will not see:
And some would see, and have not eyes.

for some, like the religious leaders of Israel, said, "We see" and saw not Jesus as Son of God and Christ (or Messiah), while others, like the man born blind,

desired to see, and were given eyes to behold Him as He really is. The day is coming, however, when all shall see Him as He really IS, as God manifest in the flesh, and they will confess Him to be LORD, whether they feel like it or not. This truth causes Paul to write, "every knee shall bow, whether in heaven, in the earth, or in the underworld; and every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is LORD, to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:10-11)

THEY ALSO WHICH PIERCED HIM

Included among the all men who shall see Christ as He really is, the Son of God and Messiah, are those who pierced Him. Lest there be confusion as to whom the "they" refers, John couches this phrase in the context of Zechariah 12:10. There we read, concerning the delivered remnant of the House of David: "and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn." We see, therefore, that our text coalesces with that of the prophet. "They" refers to the House of David, and "the inhabitants of Jerusalem." (Zech. 12:10)

ALL THE KINDREDS OF THE EARTH SHALL WAIL

The word "kindred" is more correctly rendered as "tribes." This same term is used of True Israel in

Revelation 5:5; 7:4-8; and 21:12. However our real index to this phrase is to be found in Matthew 24:30 where precisely the same words are used in the Greek text as here, with the exception of the addition of the significant words "because of Him" in our text. Again we observe that a comparison of the two texts affirms that the Coming alluded to in our text FOLLOWS the Tribulation. The notion that the world is going to get progressively better and better before Jesus comes to reign, as held by the post-millennialists, is simply without Biblical grounds. Needless to say no worthy Bible student of note has ever held the a-millennial position of interpreting Revelation.

Although, as we have just noted, the term "tribes" is used of True Israel in other Apocalyptic passages, it is also true that it is used in the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament for the nations of the earth. The Septuagint reads in translating Genesis 12:3, for example, "In thee shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed." It is to be further noted that the Greek word for "tribes" (rendered "kindred") is used five times in the Apocalypse as one of four groups which make up the world population. (Revelation 5:9, 7:9; 11:9; 13:7 and 14:6.)

BECAUSE OF HIM

Jew and Gentile alike shall "wail because of Him" in that dread Day of Judgment when He shall "come from thence to judge the quick (ie. the living) and the

dead " as is stated in the Apostles' Creed. It is to be a day when " all the tribes of the earth shall mourn ; " when mankind shall rush into " the holes of the rocks, and the caves of the earth " and " into the clefts of the rocks, and into the tops of the ragged rocks, for the fear of the Lord, and for the Glory of His Majesty . " It will be a terrible Day of Judgment in which men " shall seek death, and shall not find it; and they shall desire to die, and death shall flee from them. " The End of the Age will not be one in which perfected mankind will gladly welcome the King of kings, but one in which His coming will bring terror to every unregenerate heart.

EVEN SO , AMEN !

Here we have a solemn ratification of all that has just been said in this fearsome verse seven which has the major theme of the Apocalypse so succinctly stated "in a nutshell." This solemn ratification of the contents of the verse give assurance that all will be fulfilled with unmistakeable certainty. Only the fool dares bury his mind in the sands of doubt, and say that "No God of love would do such things as are described in the Apocalypse." Such persons do not know that God's love is expressed in His provision of that blessed Way of Escape from His wrath, right here in the moment in which we find ourselves, and that Jesus is that Way of Escape. Those who come to Him shall never perish, for they shall surely be delivered from the terrors of the Great Tribulation and the frighten-

the Wrath of the Almighty which shall fall upon mankind at the second stage of His Second Coming. Let it be realized that there will be absolutely no fear in the hearts of believers during the Tribulation, for they will be rejoicing at the Marriage Feast of the Lamb in heaven during that seven year period. There will be no quaking hearts in believers when the Lamb comes in indignation to condemn a wicked world, and to cast the Man of Sin and his false prophet into the Lake of Fire, for the saints will not be the object of the wrath of the Coming One. There need be no fear in the mind of a born-again Believer concerning what the Day of the LORD holds for him. Our concern needs to be for the lost souls about us who will either be panic stricken during the Tribulation and at His Coming at its close, or else will be called forth from the prison house of Hades at the Great White Throne judgment to be condemned and cast into the Lake of Fire for all of eternity. (Cf. Revelation 22:20)

I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA

Jesus Christ is God's alphabet! It is He who "spells out" all that the Creator is and does! Thus the title, "Alpha and Omega" declares that our Lord speaks for the Almighty in a complete and exact way. Alpha, of course, is the first letter of the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last. It is as though the speaker were declaring Himself to be the "A to Z" of the wisdom of Jehovah. This same couplet appears again in Revelation 1:11; 21:6 and 22:13.

As the Incarnate Word of God, Christ spells out in glorious detail the Person and Work of the invisible God in terms that anyone can understand. Jesus is to be viewed as God's Word to mankind. He spells out all that we can and need know of the Father. There is absolutely nothing that can be revealed concerning the Creator that is not revealed in His Word. Just as a writer must use the simple alphabet to construct the words and sentences that communicate his thoughts, so God has given us His alphabet, Jesus Christ, for the communication of His heart and mind. Christ is the Creator's "Alpha and Omega," the "beginning and the ending." He is God's alphabet, and in Him God is exegeted. (Cf. John 1:18 and 6:46)

Man constantly strives to spell out 'truth' apart from the Creator with cunningly devised schemes of evolution which deny God as Originator of all things. His vain desire, inherited from his spiritual father, "to be like God," drives him to insist that there is no such thing (or Being) as an Absolute. He cannot even begin to tolerate the idea of being the 'slave' or servant of another, even though that Other is God. To this spirit of rebellion the Scriptures reply that Christ Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the Revealer, Originator, and Consummator of all that exists.

THE BEGINNING AND THE ENDING

The Rabbinical writers made use of the phrase, "from Aleph to Taw" (that is "from A to Z") to signi-

fy that which was "complete," or "from beginning to end." Thus one writer declares that "Adam transgressed the whole law, from Aleph even to Taw." There is also another interesting variant in an ancient Midrash which says that the Seal of God consists of the three Hebrew letters, Aleph, Mem, and Taw, the first, middle, and last letters of their alphabet. The Scriptural basis given is Isaiah 44:6 which reads, "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides Me there is no god."

This declaration that Jesus is "the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending," therefore, is an affirmation of His Deity. Just as John begins his gospel with the proclamation that the Son of God was in the beginning with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and that "all things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made," so here he declares the Deity of Christ by these titles which belong only to Jehovah. The One who speaks here is the Originator of all things (Alpha) and the Fulfiller and Consummator of all things (Omega). It is He who Begins and it is He who Ends, and without Him there is no origin and no consummation.

T H E A L M I G H T Y



Lest there be any doubt as to the Deity of the One who speaks, the ineffable name of Jehovah, "He who is, who was, and who is to come" is related to the titles "Alpha and Omega" and "Beginning and Ending." The One who speaks, the Christ, is "The Almighty."

He is the Pantokrator or Ruler over all other rulers, for He alone is Omnipotence in human form. Christ is the mighty "Arm of Jehovah" which has been revealed. (Cf. Isaiah 53:1)

J O H N - Y O U R B R O T H E R

Up to this point we have been occupied with the title page and subscription (verses one and two), and with a promise of blessing (verse three). Then followed the Salutation, in which the Author (God the Holy Trinity) is identified (verses 4 through 5a) and the Person to be "revealed" in the book is exalted in a glorious Doxology (verses 5a through 8.) Here, in verse nine, we approach the Apocalypse proper, and and The Son of Man Vision in particular.

It is well that we note right here that just as John selected certain signs in the realm of works, and certain "I Am" sayings in the realm of words, to lead the reader of his Gospel to acknowledge Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, so, also, he has arranged the contents of the book of Revelation with purpose. Any one who has made a serious study of the Apocalypse knows that this remarkable book is skilfully divided into a Drama of Seven acts with Seven scenes each. The opening section, comprising chapters one through three, deals with the judgments of Christ upon His Church on earth. The central section reveals Christ and the Church in heaven, following the Rapture, and the final section unveils the Coming One and His

righteous judgment, reign, and bringing in of the new heaven and earth.

John has previously mentioned his name twice, but this is the first of three instances in which the expression "I John" appears. (Cf. 21:2 and 22:8) This same apostle refers to himself as the "disciple who testifies of these things" in his Gospel (John 21:24), and as an Elder in his epistles. Here he describes himself simply as "your brother and companion." The Greek word here translated "brother" is a term which means "out of the same womb." Of course the aged apostle does not share the same physical mother as all of the saints in the seven churches to whom the Apocalypse is addressed, but he does share the same spiritual mother — the True Church. He also shares the same "father," the Lord God Himself. He is, indeed, their "brother" in Christ.

AND COMPANION IN TRIBULATION

John is also their "companion" in terms of their tribulation, and in the kingdom. The Greek here is a word which means "sharer" or "partaker." He knows what it is to participate in the same sufferings through which they are undergoing. In fact he is in exile at the very moment that the Apocalypse is being penned because he has stood firm for Jesus, just as they are holding fast for the Saviour. He does not write as one who has "read a good book on suffering" and therefore stands ready to offer advice! John has

been a "partaker" of the same kind of tribulation, and his understanding and sympathy is genuine. The word "tribulation" (in English) is derived from an ancient Roman name for an instrument which was used to flail wheat. The idea is to beat until the grain was separated from the chaff! John affirms that he is their true brother in terms of real suffering.

IN THE KINGDOM, AND PATIENCE

As their "companion in tribulation," John is most naturally a partaker with them of the kingdom, also. In Acts 14:22 we read that Paul and Barnabas exhorted the disciples at Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch to continue in the Faith, assuring them that we all must "through many tribulations enter into the Kingdom of God." Just as Br'er Rabbit was "born and bred in a briar patch," so Christians are expected to be at home in tribulation and suffering. Even the apostle Peter declares that we are called to suffer. (Cf. the first epistle of Peter, chapter two, verse twentyone.) This relationship is made even more compact in the Greek text by the omission of the usual prepositions, so that it reads, "your brother and companion in tribulation, kingdom, and patience in Jesus." Because they suffer together with Christ they may anticipate reigning with Him in the glory of His kingdom. (Cf. Romans 8:17)

We are also reminded by the succession of words in this passage that "tribulation worketh patience." Not only is John their brother in the kingdom of our

blessed Lord, but he is also their companion in that perfect patience which is developed under pressure. There can be no fine flour without grinding, nor grape juice without crushing. In like manner there can be heavenly patience without tribulation. (Cf. I Peter 2: 19-21) The Psalmist understood this when he sang, "For Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tested us, as silver is tested." Just as silver is purified by the fierce heat of the furnace, bringing the dross to the surface so that it can be skimmed off; so tribulation's fierce flames bring the dross of short tempers to the surface so that we may see how impure we are and call upon the heavenly Silversmith to skim off the evil spirit within us as we confess it to be sin. (First John 1:9) One ought always to thank God for tribulation and suffering, confessing any bitterness, resentment, and self-pity to be the dross of sin, for such a moment is our great opportunity for spiritual growth! Tribulation worketh patience if we have learned in all things to give thanks. (Ephesians 5:20) John has been a companion or partaker of tribulation properly accepted, and, therefore, he shares also in the kingdom and "patience of Jesus Christ."

IN THE ISLE THAT IS CALLED PATMOS

The Isle of Patmos is easily located, even on our modern maps. It is a small, rockbound island with a rather ominous terrain protruding from the Aegean Sea to the southwest of Ephesus. According to the writings of the early church fathers, such as Eusebius, Irenaeus, and Clement of Alexandria, John was

apparently made to labor in the stone quarries on the island, even though he was aged. Finally the vile Domitian was assassinated, and all of his decrees and acts were officially annulled because of the strong reaction against him and his policies. As a result, in about the year A.D. 96, John was allowed to go home to his beloved Ephesus during the rule of the Emperor Nerva.

It is assumed, although we cannot say for sure, that John wrote the Apocalypse during his weary time of exile on the bleak volcanic island. At least we know that he received his amazing vision which contained all that is written in the last book of the Bible while he was incarcerated on its dreary shores. One may isolate the saints of God from humanity, but he cannot shut out the Spirit of God or limit the testimony of Jesus Christ! What the powers of Rome thought to be quarantine turned out to be John's greatest liberty in the Spirit. Again, man's extremity was simply God's opportunity, and Rome's attempt to shut off the witness of the apostle became his opportunity for such wonderful fellowship that his sensitive spirit became even more delicately attuned to that of his Lord.

When one goes to this drab island today he finds that it is about ten miles long by six miles in width, with an Eastern bay (La Scala) which spears the central portion, dividing it into two fairly equal sections. A small town is located at the foot of the monastery of St. John on the southern end of the island, with a cave called the "Grotto of the Apocalypse" in which

the venerable Seer is thought to have penned that which was revealed to him concerning the "things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter." As one stands atop any one of the lofty peaks that are scattered across the rocky terrain, he can well visualize John gazing across the sea from one of the grim promontories in quiet solitude. Here, in spite of a bleak atmosphere, John received the grandest revelation of any New Testament writer.

F O R T H E W O R D O F G O D

John was banished to the lonely stone quarries of the isle of Patmos because of the Word of God and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ. Had he not been a faithful expositor of the Word of God, and a loyal witness concerning who Jesus Christ really is, he would never have been exiled. As we shall soon discover, John's great theme is that "Jesus is LORD" which means that suspicion would be attached to him, in terms of his loyalty to Rome and her rulers. The word "Lord" is the translation of a Greek word, KURIOS from which the Latin term Caesar and the German word Kaiser is derived. For the followers of The Way to insist that "Jesus is Kurios" seemed to be a manifestation of rebellion against the authority of the Roman Caesar. This, of course, could not be tolerated, for the Roman Empire was too far flung, and its nationalities too varied to allow for the rising of a king other than Caesar of Rome. (Cf. John 19:15) The whole issue with the early Christians was simply that of loyalty, just as it was with the Romans. But

the state officials soon found out that no dedicated Christian would ever repeat the simple loyalty oath, "Caesar is Lord," even though threatened with death in the most hideous forms. As far as the born-again followers of The Way were concerned there was only one Kurios and that was Jesus Christ the Son of God.

Of course the early church recognized that the real issue revolves around, "Who is Jesus?" Those who see Him only as a "good man" or a "great prophet," have no problem with a society which is under the control of the Prince of Darkness. On the other hand the man who recognizes Jesus as the eternal God manifested in human form, the sovereign Lord of all rulers and authorities, a crisis is created. Such a person will not tolerate "final authority" in any man or organization, other than Jesus Christ our LORD.

FOR THE TESTIMONY OF JESUS CHRIST

John's problem, then, was that he preached the very "testimony of Jesus Christ" which led the Jews to seek the Saviour's death. For it was our Lord's insistence upon His Deity that precipitated Calvary, from the human standpoint at least. In John 15:18 it is made clear that the religious leaders of the Jews sought the life of Messiah Jesus because, as they put it He "said that God was His Father, making Himself God's equal." (Cf. John 10:33) Since John was the bishop of Ephesus it was only natural that the local authorities should know of his testimony, and, as we know from a study of the Fourth Gospel, the epistles

and the Apocalypse, the Godhead and Lordship of Jesus Christ is central. Like the early Christians the modern follower of Him whose name is "The Way" soon discovers that loyalty to the Lordship of Christ still has its price. Many a man who has stood firm, maintaining the Deity of the Saviour, has discovered that the world still has its isolated Patmoses for those who refuse to acknowledge other 'lords' also. Even when we are surrounded by crowds, we can still find ourselves just as isolated from the world as though we were on a bleak island! The girl who prefers the purity of Christ to popularity with the crowd will find her Patmos. The loyal Christian will always, to some extent, find that he is isolated from the rest of the world in direct proportion to his loyalty to Jesus as the Lord of his entire being and life in this world.

I WAS IN THE SPIRIT

The contents of the Apocalypse are not the result of John's own profound ponderings, but of an ecstatic experience in which he was lifted into what we might speak of as a God-given-trance. His experience on this occasion was very similar to that of Ezekiel, as recorded in Ezekiel 2:2; 3:12-14, etc.); and of Peter (Acts 10:10-11 and 11:5); and Paul (Acts 22:17-18) It is interesting to note that the Greek actually reads, "IN SPIRIT" (en pneumati), and not "in the spirit." In other words, John, "in spirit," was loosened from the normal boundries of the flesh that he might be transported forward in celestial time to the day of the Lord. I take it that John is stating that he was actual-

ly projected ("in spirit" of course) beyond terrestrial time, across the centuries, to the Day of Jehovah that he might see what is to come to pass in that Great Day. This seems logical inasmuch as the bulk of the visions which were unfurled before him have to do with the Day of the LORD.

O N T H E L O R D ' S D A Y

On the surface it might appear that the Lord's day has reference to Sunday. However, in the Gospels, as well as the Epistles, Sunday is always referred to as "the first day of the week," and never as the "Lord's day." (Cf. Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:2; Luke 24:1; John 20:9; Acts 20:7; and I Corinthians 16:2.) Since the word in the Greek text is an adjective it can be properly rendered, "The Lordian Day." Since the Apocalypse is a protest against the "lordship" of any earthly Caesar, while affirming the absolute and over-all-others Lordship of Christ, it is not surprising to discover that this term was used of an imperial day set aside for the Emperor by the Romans. It may be that this is a way of protesting his lordship, while asserting the supreme authority of Jesus Christ. At any rate it would appear that the term as used here refers to that "day" in which the Lord will judge and reign in the earth. This "day" is known throughout the Word of God as "The Day of Jehovah" (ie. the Day of the LORD.)

Actually there are three "days" set forth in Scripture: (1) The Day of Christ, which is The Rapture; (2) The Day of the Lord, which is that extended

period of time which begins with the Great Tribulation and concludes with the casting of Satan and the wicked dead into the Lake of Fire; (3) and The Day of God which will usher in the New Heaven and New Earth in which there will be no sin present. (II Peter 3:12)

HEARD BEHIND ME A GREAT VOICE

Caught up "in spirit" to view the Day of the Lord, John hears a great voice "behind" him, for he must also view that which precedes that Great Day. Turning about he is given a view of the Church Age which, of course, must go before the Rapture and all that follows. This seems to be the idea suggested by the word "behind," immediately following the statement that John was "in spirit" on the Lordian Day. First the Seer was projected in spirit to a position where he might see the Day of Jehovah before him, and, turning, he might see the Church Age in a panoramic view spread out behind him, before looking forward again to behold the terrible things that must yet come to pass. It is as though he were being assured that the Bride of Christ will be spared the terrors of the Tribulation, even though the heavenly Bridegroom is frankly aware of all of her flaws as revealed in the "backward glance" which John now takes. (Cf. 1:12)

We are here reminded of the voice from behind the prophet Ezekiel (3:12) when he was caught up by the spirit. That voice cried: "Blessed be The Glory of Jehovah from His place." The voice heard by John is now calling him to turn and behold Him who is "The

Glory of Jehovah" from His place in the midst of the Church. Just as we beheld "The Glory" tabernacled in the humanity of our Lord while He was in the midst of the people of God (John 1:14), here He is seen "in the midst" of the seven churches. (Cf. verse 13)

A S O F A T R U M P E T

There are numerous instances in Scripture where the blast of a trumpet heralds happenings of great importance. When God revealed Himself on Mount Sinai it was with the "voice of a trumpet, exceeding loud." The Year of Jubilee was announced with the clear ringing tones of a silver trumpet. The massive temple doors were swung open, that the sanctuary of The Presence might be approached by the worshipper, a trumpet was sounded. When the Church is caught up to be with the Lord, at The Rapture, it will be with the voice of an arch angel who is the trumpet of God. (Cf. I Thessalonians 4:16 and I Corinthians 15:51-53) Just as John was turned by the sound of the voice which was as a ringing trumpet peal, that he might look upon his Risen Lord, so we, too, shall one day hear the sounding of the trump of God, and we, also, shall see Him as He is! Hallelujah!

SAYING, I AM ALPHA AND OMEGA

The "voice," or one who speaks with trumpet tone, is here identified as the Lord Jesus Christ. A quick glance back to verses 5 through 8 will remind us that He has already been identified with the titles, "Alpha

and Omega " and "beginning and the ending," which are synonymous with "first and the last." We have already noted that the words Alpha and Omega are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Christ, therefore, is identified as the One who was "in the beginning" (John 1:1-3), the First One. He is the One who is the Word who brought all things into existence. He is also the Last One, Who, with the Father and the Holy Spirit will usher in the New Heaven and Earth.

As the "Alpha and Omega," Christ is God's alphabet. Just as our libraries contain millions of books written with a 26-letter English alphabet, revealing the minds of the writers, so God has revealed Himself in the One who is His alphabet, His "Alpha and Omega." Our Lord is the Father's message of sins forgiven, to those who will come to the Mercy Seat, and He is the message of warning to those who refuse to repent of their rebellion, calling upon the name of the Lord that they might be saved.

WHAT THOU SEEST, WRITE IN A BOOK

The command which John has to write what he sees in a book is the first of twelve such instances. All is to be done, of course, in accordance with verse two. There are a series of separate visions given to John. After each he is directed to write down what he has seen, with the exception of 10:4 where he is instructed not to write. The "book" referred to is undoubtedly the book of The Revelation of Jesus Christ which is our study text at the present time.

The visions, recorded as directed, are to be sent to "the seven churches which are in Asia (Minor) ; unto Ephesus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea."

T H E S E V E N C H U R C H E S

If you will refer to the simple map on page you will observe that the highways connecting the seven cities mentioned in our text form an irregular loop or circle. If you will locate Ephesus, which is the city nearest the Isle of Patmos, you will discover that by following the road to the north your next city will be Smyrna. From there, continuing clockwise around the loop, you will realize that Christ has named the seven churches in the order of their geographical occurrence. Later, as we study the seven letters which He dictated, we shall observe that the same order is maintained.

It is also interesting to note that this circle of assemblies of Christ lay in the very theatre of service where the apostle Paul had labored as a missionary. Without doubt the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians was circulated around this same circuit of churches. As we read the messages of Christ Jesus to the seven churches we shall be made painfully aware of the fact that the spiritual dynamic of apostolic days had already lost much of its freshness and potency, as the second generation of Christians came along. We shall find that the same conditions which prevail in the organized church today were already manifest in the

primitive church of John's day. Hence the relevancy of the seven letters of Jesus for our day and time. As we remember that one of the main themes of the last book of the Bible is that Jesus, not Caesar, is "Lord" it will not surprise us to learn that these seven cities were headquarters of the official cult of Emperor worship in Asia Minor. There are other pieces of information, gained from the study of history and other secular sources, which can add to our understanding of the Apocalypse. In fact we can learn very much from what history tells us about the population of these towns, their religions, their morals, and so on. Let us take a moment, therefore, to gain a bit of background on the seven cities in which the churches were located.

E P H E S U S

Ephesus had one of the great seaports of the ancient world in spite of the fact that the fast flowing Cayster loaded it with silt as quickly as it could be dredged. By Paul's time the work of keeping the harbor clean was slowing down, and, by Justinian's day, some six centuries later, the war with sand and silt had been lost. Today the remains of ancient Ephesus stand as a monument to man's prodigal treatment of the earth. The land had been so greedily cropped, and the timber lands so completely destroyed, that the denuded soil had nothing to hold it in place. Churning and tossing its way down the Cayster it plunged into the harbor, bringing about the loss of fertile land, then a harbor, and, finally, the commerce from the sea.



Artemis of the Ephesians

This many-busted goddess is constructed of marble, alabaster and bronze. She was known to the Romans as Diana and to the Greeks as Artemis. This particular statue was removed from Ephesus to the museum at Naples, Italy. Note the symbolic fertility-cult animals that are carved on her strange gown. (See Acts 19:23-41)

Ephesus was not only a stopping place for sailors, but for a multitude of traveling salesmen as well. Both were usually eager for excitement by the time they arrived in this pagan port, and there was plenty to keep them occupied while they were there. Ephesus was a lusty, brawling municipality in which every sort of entertainment could be found — most of it evil. Three great Roman highways converged upon the city. Wealth and commerce flowed in from the Euphrates valley, the Leander valley, and Galatia. Ephesus was, indeed, a city filled with entertainment and commerce.

She was also a political power, and delighted in her ancient title, "The Supreme Metropolis of Asia." As a Free City, Ephesus did not have to put up with a Roman army of occupation. The Empire allowed her to govern herself, choosing her rulers in a democratic fashion. She also had the honor of being an Assize town in which the Roman governor came from time to time to try the important legal cases. The arrival of a Roman governor and his entourage was always a big occasion, and heralded by much pomp and circumstance. Ephesus, therefore, was well acquainted with the grandeur that was Rome!

Not only was Ephesus politically and commercially of great importance, but she was also outstanding as a center of pagan religions. One of the Seven Wonders of the World, the temple of Artemis (known to the Romans as "Diana") had stood there since the dawn of history. The ancient Greeks had a saying:

"The sun sees nothing more magnificent in its journey than the temple of Artemis!" In fact the people of Ephesus were so passionate about their goddess that they called themselves "the temple sweepers of Artemis." They were delighted to be thought of as the slaves of the goddess whom they called the "Queen of Heaven."

One might well think, as he reads Luke's very vivid account of the rioting silversmiths in Acts 19, that the chant "Great is Diana (Artemis) of the Ephesians might be prompted by a figure of great beauty. Such was not the case in the early days, although at a later date the sensitive Greek sculptors produced a more refined image for the people to worship. The first idol was apparently a meteorite which had a sort of a female shape. Artemis was therefore said to have "fallen from heaven" or "the sky." She was originally a repulsive, dark, squatty figure, covered with dozens of breasts to symbolize fertility. Her temple worship made use of some ten thousand girls and women who were called "holy women" because, as history shows, they 'united' male worshippers with their goddess. In some instances there were male prostitutes and sodomites for the women and effeminate. It was an ugly affair all the way round, and the worship of Artemis (Diana) literally smelled of hell.

Finally, it should be noted that the temple of this pagan goddess possessed the right of asylum. As a result there was a steady stream of criminals and vile reprobates constantly pouring into its precincts.

The Ephesian law read that if anyone could get within two hundred yards of the temple of Artemis before being caught, he would have complete protection, regardless of his crime! The idea was that this goddess was the "saviour of all men who called upon her name, regardless of their evil deeds." The weeping Greek philosopher, Heraclitus, a citizen of Ephesus, is said to have written that the morals of the temple were even worse than filthy beasts, because of much mutilating of bodies which took place. In the midst of such a city we find one of the assemblies of Christ set as a light in a dark place.

S M Y R N A

Smyrna was a very beautiful city because it was a "Planned Metropolis." It had streets that were wide and straight as an arrow from one end to the other. Tons of precious cargo flowed into one end of the city where it joined the great Roman highway that led to the Orient by way of the valley of the river Hermus, and down the "Avenue of Gold" to the docks. On either side of this magnificent thoroughfare were fabulous temples, inlaid with gold and precious gems. Rivaling the stunning buildings erected to pagan gods were equally impressive public monuments, including a great library, a huge stadium, and the largest open air theatre in all of Asia Minor. Smyrna claimed Homer as its native son, and a fine monument was erected in a prominent place in his honor. On every hand pagan splendor met the eye of the Christians who lived in the city called "The Glory of Asia."

With camel caravans pouring into the Avenue of Gold, the treasures of the Orient found their way to the eagerly awaiting ships. Due to the prodigal treatment of the soil and the resultant ruin of the harbor, the great ships sailed past Ephesus and docked in the beautiful port at Smyrna. As the city to the south began to lose business, Smyrna's merchants began a booming trade that seemed to know no bounds. As a result the businessmen of the thriving port became extremely wealthy.

Smyrna was also a metropolis of great political importance, and a center of Emperor worship. Its citizens were quite vain about the beauty of their town and they spared no funds to make it an earthly paradise. From the human point of view, these people had everything in the world to boast about, so they did! It also had a large hill called Mount Pajos which was adorned with graceful columns and buildings which looked very much like a glorious crown as ships approached it from the sea.

Smyrna not only claimed to lead all other cities in beauty and magnificence, but it also declared that it led all of Asia Minor in the worship of Caesar. As we shall see in our study of the Seven Letters of Jesus, in chapters two and three of the Apocalypse, it was the worship of the Emperor as "Lord" which precipitated a real crisis for the churches of Christ. Since no real understanding of the book of Revelation can be had without a grasp of the threat that Caesar worship posed, it is important that we examine the matter at

least briefly. The whole thing began with a desire on the part of the Roman Senate to unify the empire. As you undoubtedly know the Roman Empire was a huge conglomeration of nations and city-states from the British Isles to Asia Minor and Palestine. As a result there was a wild mixture of peoples, tongues, and religions. Desiring to unite the nations over which they had dominion, the Roman Senate and their Caesar sought for that intangible "something" which would bring unity to the empire, and which would effectively integrate the various elements involved. It was determined that the level on which this could best be achieved was the religious.

Recognizing that there was no one religion which was flexible enough to admit of universal application, the senators knew that their only hope was to add another "god" to the already crowded pantheon of "gods many." In this way each man could continue to worship his own private deity, and he would not be made angry if another god were added to the collection. In their search for a "unifying deity" the Roman Senate saw that the "spirit" of Rome was focused and embodied in the person of the Emperor. In him the Pax Romana or "Roman Peace" assumed a visible form. Since disciplined Roman rule had brought peace to the land and sea alike, it was quite natural that the leader of the empire should be honored by most of the people. Since many a king had seen the value of being allied with Rome, in order that his people might be guaranteed a security that he could not bring, the deliberate willing of kingdoms to Rome was really

quite common. There was a willingness, therefore, on the part of local leaders and provincials alike to give abundant honor to Caesar. It was not too difficult to gradually persuade the populace to add another "god" to the local list of deities to be worshipped. However, as you can well imagine, that which once was voluntary under one Caesar became compulsory under another. By the end of the first century, during the early days of the Church and the ministry of John, the Emperor Domitian made Caesar worship obligatory.

We must understand, however, that the purpose of the Roman Senate in encouraging Emperor worship was the unification of the empire. They did not take the idea of their leader being a superhuman deity seriously! The demand of Domitian himself was not based on the firm belief that he was a superhuman creature. The worship of Caesar was a test of political loyalty. It was a way of showing that the citizens were willing to bow the knee to the authority of Rome. Rome did not care if a man was a Christian, and a worshipper of Jesus Christ as The Son of God, just as long as he made an annual acknowledgement of the supreme lordship of Caesar and obeyed the laws of public decency and order. This, to the Senate, did not seem too much to ask. However, whenever the annual loyalty oath was taken it was discovered that the people known as "followers of The Way" would not oblige by burning incense to the Emperor and declaring, "Caesar is Lord." They believed that the title "Lord" should be reserved for the Son of God

and for Him only. Furthermore, since incense was a symbol of prayer, the very act of burning incense to the king of Rome would have been acknowledging him to be God. It was simply more than any born-again Believer was willing to do. (Cf. Philippians 2:11)

Men of state who were not born of the Spirit of the Living God, through faith in Christ, were not able to comprehend this attitude on the part of Christians. As far as they could see they were dealing with a group of disaffected citizens who were disloyal to the reigning monarch. Anyone can certainly understand that no nation the size of the ancient Roman empire could afford to ignore apparent disloyalty from groups which openly refused to show allegiance to the powers that be. As a result of the unwillingness of the men and women called "Christians" to burn incense to the Emperor, and to call him "Lord," the early church became the target of eager nationalists. They were outlawed by those who were proud to acknowledge the lordship of Caesar, and the enemies of the Church often joined hands in informing the authorities of all followers of Christ who would not conform. It may be easily seen, therefore, that it was dangerous to be a practicing Christian in the days that the last book of the Bible was written.

The chief informers in Smyrna were the Jews who formed a sizeable segment of the population. It was natural that there should be a tension between the two religious bodies, for the Church insisted that Jesus was the Messiah of the Jew, and the Jews insisted He

was an imposter. Anxious to rid themselves of the followers of the Prophet whom they had rejected as their Christ, the leaders of the Synagogue of Smyrna did all they could to create trouble for the Church. It is a known historical fact that the Jews were responsible for the martyrdom of Polycarp, beloved bishop of the Church of Smyrna, and a disciple of John. On a feast day, when political excitement was at a fever pitch, the Jews sent up a cry to seize Polycarp, saying that the venerable bishop was a destroyer of their gods. The demand was made that he worship Caesar as a god, or die at the flaming stake. Polycarp freely admitted that he was a Christian, and gave his immortal reply: "For 86 years I have served Christ, and He has never wronged me. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" A scream of rage went up from the members of the synagogue. The mob was incited, and the Jews spent the Sabbath day laboring at the task of bringing faggots for the fire. As they placed the torch to the dry branches about his feet the sturdy martyr shouted, "I do not fear the fire that burns for a season and is finally quenched! Why do you wait? Come, do your will!" Then, as the flames burst upon his clothing, he was heard to pray: "Lord, I thank Thee that Thou hast graciously thought me to be worthy of this day and hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of the martyrs, in the Cup of Thy Christ."

It was in the midst of such a populace that the little band of Believers bore their testimony that Jesus, not Caesar, is Lord over all, even at the cost of death.

The Jews, on the other hand, in spite of the fact that they claimed to believe that Jehovah was the one and only God, took the loyalty oath once a year, declaring that "Caesar is Lord." Their venom was so great that they took pleasure in the death of every follower of Jesus Christ whom their leaders in Jerusalem had hanged on a tree. (Cf. John 8:44)

P E R G A M O S

Pergamos was a capital city, royally sited, with a commanding view of both mountainpeaks and isles. It had been an ancient seat of government for more than four hundred years when, in A.D. 30, the first temple to Caesar as a god was erected. It had been the capital of the Attalid kingdom, which was one of the subdivisions of Alexander the Great's empire when it was parted by his generals. Over one hundred years before the birth of Christ the king of Pergamum (or Pergamos as we have it in the KJV) bequeathed it to the Roman Empire. Since it was a gift, and not one of the spoils of war, the Romans made it the capital of Asia Minor, and Pergamos was still the capital when John penned the Apocalypse. Although it was not the equal of Ephesus and Smyrna as far as commercial greatness was concerned, Pergamos was historically their superior. It was also counted to be the great cultural and medical center of Asia Minor.

From the standpoint of culture, Pergamos had the honor of posessing one of the finest libraries in the world. It was second only in size to the great library

at Alexandria, Egypt. These libraries were really remarkable in that they contained a quarter of a million volumes in a day when all books were hand printed! The literary life of Pergamos was known throughout the world, both in the East and the West, and the king of Pergamos was anxious to make his city's fine library the greatest. As a result he began to court the services of the famous librarian of Byzantium, a chap by the name of Aristophanes. He offered him a quite fabulous salary to leave Ptolmey, king of Egypt, for the purpose of developing the library of Pergamos. When Ptolmey heard that king Eumenes was trying to steal his prized scholar, he threw Aristophanes into prison! Then, seeking to spite the king of Pergamos, he put a ban on the export of writing paper (papyrus) to Asia Minor.

The king of Pergamos now had a real problem! The major source of paper was Egypt. Without writing material there could be no books! Putting his leading 'brains' to work on the problem they came up with an answer. Necessity was again the mother of invention and the Pergamene Charta ("paper of Pergamos") was the result. This "paper" was made from the skins of animals, and the name "parchment" is derived from the word Pergamos. Many of the early manuscripts on which the Bible was hand lettered were on both parchment and papyrus.

Pergamos, too, had its great pagan temples. High above the city, jutting out from the side of a mountain, was a great ledge upon which was erected the

tremendous altar of Zeus Soter ("Zeus the Saviour.") On the great acropolis which rose above Pergamos there were many other ornate temples, including that of Asklepios, the god of medicine. (His symbol was a staff intertwined by two serpents, a symbol which signifies our modern medical profession.) The people of Pergamos were apparently enthusiastic worshippers of serpent-gods, for the altar of Zeus is covered with a bas-relief showing a conflict between legendary gods and giants. The latter were represented as the brood of the Viper, with snake-like tails issuing from their muscular bodies. The ancient coins and buildings of this ancient capital city also display the Serpent.

T H Y A T I R A



Of the seven towns mentioned in our text, the little community of Thyatira was the smallest and the least important. Pliny the Elder, one of the historians of Rome, writes contemptuously of this town with the words, "Thyatira and other unimportant villages." It had nothing about it that gave it a bid to glory. It had temples, but they were nothing special. It had a fair stadium and library, but only fair. It was located in the mouth of a strategic valley through which main highways ran to Constantinople and Damascus, and yet it did not enjoy the commerce of either Pergamos or Smyrna. It began as a military post which was designed to hold back the enemy until Pergamos could prepare her defenses. There was one area, however, in which Thyatira shone commercially, and that was in the wool and dye trade. It will be remembered, of

course, that Lydia, the "seller of purple," was from Thyatira. (Acts 16:14) Her product, "purple," was a very expensive dye which sold for about \$300.00 per pound. It was almost worth its weight in gold!

Like many other cities of Asia Minor, Thyatira had its share of powerful trade guilds. These guilds created many a crisis for the Christian community. The old question of "sitting at meat in the temple of an idol" (I Cor. 8:10) confronted the church at Thyatira as well as at Corinth. Each Christian craftsman had to answer the question as to how he could attend the licentious banquets of the guild, where food was eaten which had previously been offered to pagan gods, without bearing a false testimony to Christ.

S A R D I S

Where Thyatira was held in contempt as an "unimportant village" by many, Sardis was acknowledged to be a very important city. It was a very ancient city, and the old world was full of tales about its wealth. It seemed that Sardinians were born to opulence, for its inhabitants had every opportunity to be increased in goods and wealth. There was even a river flowing through the middle of the metropolis that brought gold nuggets into the eager hands of those willing to pan its waters! Business was booming on every hand. A knot of five main highways to key commercial centers made it a hub of activity. In fact it was in Sardis that modern money was born! Nearly six hundred years before Christ, under the leadership of King Croesus,

the first electrum staters were minted in Sardis. It was crude metal money, but it was the first coinage.

Sardis was also reputed to have an impregnable fortress for it was located on a rugged mountainside. It had towering cliffs leading up to it, and directly behind it. Unless one came up by the narrow road, which was easily defended by a handful of soldiers, it seemed an impossibility for enemy troops to get into the city. The Greek historian, Herodotus, tells a wonderful story of the capture of Sardis by Cyrus. (See Herodotus 1.84) A magnificent reward had been offered by King Cyrus to the soldier who could figure out a method of military entry into the city. A trooper by the name of Hyeroeades was watching the walls intently one day when he saw a Lydian soldier drop his helmet over the battlements. It went clanging down the mountainside. As Hyeroeades continued to observe, the soldier from Sardis began to climb down the cliff to his helmet, and back up to the battlements again. Hyeroeades made a careful mental note of the route traversed by the thoughtless Sardinian, and, late that night, he led a carefully selected band of soldiers up the mountain by that route. The people of Sardis were so confident that their fortress was impregnable, that they had no guards on the battlement. Only the towers by the great gate by the roadway had a guard unit on duty. As a result Hyeroeades and his fellow soldiers made an easy entry, and Sardis was easily taken. The same thing happened two hundred years later in the campaign of Antiochus, an example of the fact that the citizens did not learn from their

history the importance of being on guard at all times. It is interesting to note that one of the statements of Christ to the church at Sardis was, "Be watchful!"

Loaded with wealth, and lulled to sleep with their assurance of security from the enemy, the men of Sardis became indolent. They were described by the historian Herodotus as being effeminate, guitar strumming tenderfeet, who indulged themselves while tending their prosperous shops. The pagans themselves spoke contemptuously of Sardinians because of the looseness of the morals of their women and the pretty boy deportment of their men. It was a wealthy, but a very depraved community.

P H I L A D E L P H I A

Philadelphia was a marked contrast to Sardis, for it was a rough border town. It stood at that point geographically where Mysia, Lydia, and Phrygia met. It was the gateway to the Orient. Xerxes, the powerful Persian monarch, moved through this area which would one day be Philadelphia, on his way to invade the continent of Europe. It was strategically located as an outpost between West and East.

The name "Philadelphia" was gained from the nickname of its founder, Attalus II. Because of his great fondness for his brother, Attalus II was called "brother lover" or Philadelphos. This Greek word is a compound of two Greek words, PHILOS ("love") and ADELPHOS ("brother.") The word comes down to us

in the name of William Penn's city, Philadelphia, the City of Brotherly Love.

The city was located on the periphery of an area covered with rich volcanic ash which created a fertile soil for the growing of lush grapes. The same basic ingredients which produced the ash also produced hot springs which were diverted to public baths, and earthquakes that were sometimes ruinous. After one particularly devastating earthquake which occurred in the time of Tiberius Caesar's reign, Philadelphia was completely destroyed. Tiberius canceled the taxes of the citizens and contributed generously to the rebuilding of the metropolis. In appreciation for his aid the leaders gave their town a "new name," New Caesarea. The name later reverted back to Philadelphia by popular demand of the citizenry.

The city was so full of temples and idols that it was often referred to as "Little Athens." Whenever an individual rendered exceptional public service to Philadelphia he was rewarded by having his name inscribed on a pillar which was erected in one of the beautiful temples. When we study the letter of Jesus to the church of Philadelphia we will discover that He speaks of a "new name" and a "pillar in the temple of My God."

L A O D I C E A

This very important city was founded by Antiochus the Second, whose wife was named Laodicea. It, too,

had a strong geographical location in a narrow pass where the Lycus river spreads out into the valley of the Meander river. Antiochus the Second had chosen the narrow pass in which Laodicea was located because it served as a fortified gateway to Phrygia. As such it also controlled the flow of commerce which flowed down its rivers to the sea. It was also united to East and West by three major highways.

Antiochus II, the founder of Laodicea belonged to the royal household known as the Seleucids, one of the families among whom the empire of Alexander the Great was divided. Whenever one of these Seleucid monarchs founded a town he made it a policy to offer free citizenship to all Jews who were interested, for it was felt that the Jewish merchant encouraged prosperity wherever he settled. It has been estimated that nearly 10,000 Jews were resident in Laodicea at the time the Apocalypse was written. These people were very influential in political affairs, and, as ancient records show, even succeeded in obtaining a grant to follow their own customs and laws, even if contrary to that of Rome! Obviously such a strong Jewish element would create a real source of trouble for the Christians in Laodicea.

As a city Laodicea was so wealthy that it refused aid from Rome when it was laid in ruins by an earthquake in the year 60 A.D. The whole attitude was "We are rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing!" They gained much of their wealth from the sale of their famous garments made of shin-

ing wool from their beautiful black sheep. The black garments of Laodicea would serve as a symbol of the world to the church in that community, when the Lord exhorted them to cover their spiritual nakedness with garments of white.

The Laodiceans were also widely known for their medical school which had been made famous by its eye salves and powders. The most famous of these was the Tephra Phrygia which was supposed to heal and strengthen ailing eyes. The risen Christ exhorts the Laodiceans, therefore, to anoint their eyes with spiritual eyesalve that they might gain true vision.

I TURNED TO SEE THE VOICE THAT SPAKE

Hearing this **great** voice which rang like a trumpet behind him, John **turned** to see the Speaker. I take it that this is a **figure** of metonymy, "voice" being used instead of Him who spoke, namely the Son of God. The **emphasis** upon the turning seems to suggest that there is a change of attitude. John was "in spirit" looking forward to that dread Day of Judgment when the Righteous Judge of a world in rebellion would come to put wrong matters right. It is as though the Voice were saying, "John, before we look at what I am going to do to the cruel enemies of My Church, let us first examine what is wrong with My assemblies. After all "judgment must begin at the house of God." (Cf. 1st Peter 4:17) Then, when you have seen the church as I see it, then shall we have a look at "what shall be the end of them that obey not the Gospel of God."

It is always good for the Believer to follow the procedure of heeding the voice of Christ, examining himself first in the light of the Word before passing judgment upon others. This is especially good in those instances where we feel that we are being persecuted for the sake of our faithfulness to Christ. If we eagerly look forward to God's righteous judgment of those who hate Christ and His servants, then we need to be "turned" first to view ourselves in the Light of The One who is in the midst of the Church.

I SAW 7 GOLDEN CANDLESTICKS

"I saw seven golden candlesticks" is more accurately rendered, "I saw seven golden lampstands." The candle is Babylonish, and not Jewish. It is self-consuming, while the oil lamp is capable of perpetual light. The term used here indicates that John beheld seven separate lampstands, and not a seven-branched lampstand, such as was found in the building of gold-covered boards under the Tabernacle of Witness. Of course this fact does not alter the meaning, for in the case of the seven-branched oil lampstand of the O. T. the symbolic message is the same as here. Christ is the shaft or "vine" and the believers are the branches which, with Him, form the lampstand. Without Him we are "six" or "incomplete." Yet, united to Christ, through the NewBirth, we are "seven" or "complete." Just as the branch, united to The Vine, brings forth spiritual fruit because of the life-giving flow of the Holy Spirit, so the "fruit" of the golden lampstand is the Light which is produced by the dispensing of the

life-giving flow of the Oil of the Spirit. The supply of oil for the golden lamps atop the golden lampstand was provided by the High Priest, who also kept the wicks trimmed. Christ is our High Priest, and He it is who trims the smoking wick of our lives as we confess our sins, and it is He who furnishes the Oil of the Holy Spirit ignited by the One who is "like a Refiner's Fire." We are called "lights" by the One who is The Light of the world, for we are commissioned, by Christ, to lift up the Word which is a "lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path." (Psalm 119:105)

The Jews also have an eight-branched lampstand. The eighth oil lamp is referred to significantly as the "Slave of the lamps." The symbolism makes reference to the Person of Ebed Yahweh ("The Slave of Jehovah") who makes His appearance now and again in the pages of the Old Testament. As we have seen Jesus Christ is the Slave of Jehovah, for He always obeyed His Father in heaven. It is He who stands in the midst of the Church, trimming the wicks and supplying the Oil of the Spirit of God.

The seven golden lampstands speak of the church in its completeness, as it is and has been through all of the ages and in all parts of the earth. This is made clear in verse twenty in the first chapter of Revelation where we read: "and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches." We have already seen that seven is emblematic of perfection or completeness, so the message is from Christ to the Church as it really is, has been, and shall be during the Church Age.

When John was turned he saw more than the seven golden lampstands. He saw also the Keeper of the lamps. He saw the One who, as a Righteous Judge, disciplines the Church as He trims the wicks of those who are producing more smoke than light. He saw the Person who furnishes the Oil of His Spirit so that there might be Light. He saw the Lord Jesus who so often referred to Himself as "Son of Man."

A N D I N T H E M I D S T

Every born-again Believer knows who it is that is "in the midst" of the True Church, where "two or three are gathered together in (His) Name." If this were the only clue leading to the identity of the Person standing in the midst of the Church, the seven golden lampstands, it would be sufficient to declare that it is the Lord. However, as we shall see, there are many things which identify the Speaker, the Alpha and Omega, as Jesus the Christ, Son of Man and Son of God.

When our Saviour told the disciples, "For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them," He was not only giving them a promise, but identifying Himself as God the Son! He is the Tree of Life "in the midst" of the garden of God. He is the Voice who spoke to Moses from "the midst of the bush" that burned without being consumed. (Ex. 3:4) Later, on Mount Sinai, it was He who called to the great lawgiver from "out of the midst of the cloud." (Ex. 24:16) The disciples knew

knew that it was Jehovah whose Voice thundered forth from "the midst" of the great eruption of flame on top of Sinai (Deut. 4:12), and that the Glory Cloud which rested on the Tabernacle of Witness was a testimony to the Presence of their God. This meant that Jehovah was "in the midst" of His people, and it was to this that John made reference when he stated that "The Word was made flesh and pitched His tabernacle in our midst, and we beheld His glory..." (paraphrase of the Greek text of John 1:14) It is of our Lord Jesus that the Psalmist wrote, "For God is my King of old, working salvation in the midst of the earth." (74:12) The disciples would be very much aware of the fact that it was always Jehovah who dwelt in the midst of His people, and that the claim of Jesus to be the One who was present "in the midst" of those gathered together in His name was a claim to Deity. Isaiah is heard to sing: "great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst." (12:6) Jeremiah also spoke of the LORD as the One Who is in the midst of His people called by His name. (14:9) God declares that He is the Holy One "in the midst" of His people in Hoshea 11:9; Joel 2:27; Zepheniah 3:15; and Zechariah 2:10. There can be no doubt but that any Jew who heard Jesus say that He would be "in the midst" of every group that assembled in His name, would know that He was the Son of God, and the Father's equal. (Cf. John 5:18 & 10:33)

OF THE SEVEN CANDLESTICKS

Since we have already seen that the "seven golden

candlesticks (lampstands) " signify the Church in its completeness and entirety, it is obvious that the One who stands "in the midst" is the LORD of Glory.

LIKE UNTO THE SON OF MAN

"Son of Man" was an O.T. term that was used both as a circumlocution for finite man as compared with the infinite God, as in Psalm 8:4 where David cries: "What is man, that Thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that Thou visiteth him?", and as a title for Messiah, as in Daniel 7:13. Our blessed Lord constantly referred to Himself by the title, "Son of Man." In fact the title is applied to Jesus some 84 times in the gospels. In Matthew 24:30 the Saviour identifies Himself as the Son of Man spoken of by the prophet Daniel, to which we have already referred. By the application of this title to Himself, in this particular way, Jesus clearly identified Himself as the Son of the Ancient of Days and Messiah of the Jews. (See also Matthew 26:64)

Stephen brought the wrath of the Jews down upon his own head when he declared: "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God!" (Acts 7:56) The Jews knew that he was declaring Jesus to be Son of God and Messiah by the use of the term "Son of Man" in conjunction with the phrase "right hand of God," so they stoned him for what they believed to be blasphemy. (Cf. Matthew 26:63-64 and John 1:50-52.) A careful comparison of the Scriptures where the title "Son of Man" appears

will reveal that our Lord understood Himself to be the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13. (Cf. Mark 8:38; 13:26 and 14:62) You will note the easy transition that is made in the Mark 8:31 sequence where Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ is clearly related to the words of Jesus that "the Son of Man must suffer." In like manner in Mark 13:26 our Lord declares that although many "false Christs" shall arise who shall deceive men, still when certain signs occur, "then shall they see the Son of Man coming." It will also be observed that when He is exhorted to declare whether or not He is Messiah, "the Son of the Blessed (One)," our Lord answers in the affirmative, and adds: "And ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of (The) Power." It is clear that the Son of Man and The Christ of God are one and the same person.

It is altogether proper that Christ should reveal Himself in the role of Son of Man "in the midst" of the Church, for this Figure is identified in the apocalyptic literature of the Old Testament with the One who comes with clouds, and receives the Messianic kingdom from the hand of the Ancient of Days. John has been transported "in spirit" to the Day of the LORD, the Day in which Messiah takes over His kingdom, so John sees The Son of Man first in relation to the body of Believers, then as the Coming One.

A GARMENT DOWN TO THE FOOT

The manner in which the Son of Man is dressed is indicative of His role in the midst of the churches of

Asia Minor. The garment in which He appeared was a sign of two offices, of High Priest and King of kings. This, of course, is in keeping with the symbolism of the description of the Son of Man's appearance as a whole. We shall discover that Christ is herein displayed as the Righteous Judge of the Church, as well as the unbelieving world, who also intercedes on her behalf before the Father. One of the ancient commentators, Bengel, writes concerning this passage: "A King is more exalted than a priest. Hence Scripture speaks much oftener of the kingdom than of the priesthood of Christ." He writes further, "One who is busy girds himself about the loins (Isa. 11:5). But he who girds himself about the breast must be in a state of repose. Jesus, by His sufferings and death, has overcome all. What profound reverence should fill our hearts before this incomparable majesty!" (Cf. Hebrews 4:10) This message, then, is being brought by the glorified Lord in terms of His dignity as the King who judges in righteousness, and the High Priest who effectively represents his people before the Majesty on high. (Cf. Psalm 50:4 and Heb. 5:5.) Like Samuel the priest who also judged, and David the king who also judged, we find our great King-Priest to be the One who also judges His people righteously. His robe, like that of Aaron, is designed for "glory and beauty." (Exodus 28:2)

The cut or design of the robe of a man was of great importance among the ancients. It was not so much the modern notion of "clothes make the man," but, that the rank of the man determined what clothes he

he should and would normally wear. In ancient times it was expected that a king would adorn himself with a long, trailing robe, as a mark of dignity and honor. Thus, in the vision of Isaiah, where the LORD is seen upon His throne, the great King of kings is depicted with a flowing robe, the train of which filled the temple. The wearing of just such a robe by the Son of Man in the vision at hand is another way of identifying Him as the enthroned One of Isaiah's vision.

In the symbolism of Scripture a garment often tells something of the character of an individual. A soiled garment speaks of an unclean nature, just as a clean robe declares a cleansed nature. For example white linen garments signify the righteousness of the saints of God who are cleansed by the blood of the Lamb in Revelation 19:8. It is suggested that the garments of Jeshua the high priest of Zechariah 3, also speak of a contrast of natures.

GIRT * WITH A GOLDEN GIRDLE

Dr. G. Campbell Morgan feels that "Jesus moves amid the churches with the robe reaching to His feet marking the fact that He is the sole Governor of His people, having the right to pass His verdict upon their service, and reward or punish them as He will. The golden girdle about the breasts reveals the fact that every judgment He pronounces, and every sentence He passes, is based upon His infinite love and faithfulness." (Compare Isaiah 11:5) He who stands in the midst of the church is the Righteous Judge.



Perhaps it would be well for us to pause at this point to say a further word about Hebrew symbolism. Like most oriental imagery it says far more than the same truth, couched in blunt Western terms, could ever hope to say. Many persons have come to a place of hopeless confusion, while attempting to analyze this Son of Man Vision recorded in verses 13-16, because they fail to remember it is "sign-i-fied." They make the serious mistake of taking the symbols literally, when it is the Message of the symbols which is to be literally received.

Some students of the Apocalypse are like the artist who drew the picture in Luther's Bible of 1522, which is reproduced on page 118 of this commentary. They take it that John actually saw Jesus standing in the midst of the seven golden lampstands with snow white hair, literal fire blazing from his eye sockets, a big sword clenched between his teeth, actual stars in his right hand, and with feet of real brass. As one Bible teacher of mine used to say, "Such a picture, is, indeed, absurd, and the very incongruity should teach us that the understanding of this passage must lie in another direction." Like Dr. Donald Gray Barnhouse I take it that the Semitic imagery which greets us in our text, as well as in the rest of the Apocalypse, is not meant to be visualized or reproduced as Christian art. It is designed to communicate a Message, and it is the Message that we are to take literally, and not the symbols in which that Message is couched. The Message here is that Jesus is Jehovah, the Judge of all men (including the Church.)

The unusual phrase "about the paps" means "about the chest." As we have already noted this was the position of belting for royalty and priests, for Jesus being identified as King-Priest.

H I S H E A D A N D H A I R S

"His head and His hairs were white like wool, as white as snow" says John. What does he mean by this? Did the terrible experience of being scourged, and crucified, cause His hair to suddenly turn snow white? If so, why is this not mentioned in the Gospel accounts? Or is it to be understood as an Identification Symbol bearing a Message? If it is the latter we should be able to find it elsewhere in Scripture for the symbols of Scripture are explained by Scripture.

In Daniel 7:9 Jehovah, "The Ancient of Days," is portrayed as dressed in raiment "white as snow" and the hair of His head is "like the pure wool." Surely it is obvious that John is making an exact identification of the Son of Man with The Ancient of Days. He is symbolically saying that the One who said: "I and My Father are One (God)" is none other than the Eternal Jehovah who stands "in the midst" of His people.

The snow white hair speaks of the eternity of the One who stands "in the midst" of the Church. Or we might say that Christ is "crowned" with the Eternal. Paul says that "the head of Christ is God," and Proverbs 16:31 declares that "the hoary head is a crown of glory." As a symbolical color, white represents

the Shekinah, the Glory of the Presence. It speaks of the effulgence of Light which emmenates from the Being of Jehovah. The white garment of the Ancient of Days in Daniel is clothed in a robe of glory and of dazzling light. (Cf. Psalm 104:2 and I Timothy 6:15-16) The word is used sixteen times in the Apocalypse and is a consistent symbol of glory and purity, for that which is eternal is pure and that which is pure is eternal.

It will be remembered that in the transfiguration of our Lord that Matthew wrote that He was "transfigured before them: and His face did shine as the sun, and His raiment was white as the light!" (Matthew 17:2) There can be no doubt but that the Son of Man of the Gospels and the apocalyptic writings of John and Daniel are one and the same Person, Jesus Christ. It is interesting to observe that the entire picture presented in the Son of Man vision is one of Light— Light pouring from the flaming eyes, the gleaming countenance, the luminous hair, the sparkling stars, the radiant feet, and the blazing oil lamps. The Central Light is Christ, the Sun of Righteousness. (Mal. 4:2)

E Y E S A S A F L A M E

As the Righteous Judge of all men, including those in the assembly of born-again-ones, Christ is seen here testing the works of the Church to see of what sort they are. The apostle Paul referred to just such a testing in his first epistle to the church at Corinth. (I Corinthians 3:11-15) Works done for the glory of

the flesh will vanish in smoke before His penetrating gaze, like wood, hay, and stubble before the terrible inferno of a Flame Thrower. These blazing eyes cut through the façade of our pretenses, consuming that which we fail or refuse to confess to be sin that we might be forgiven and cleansed. (I John 1:9) Paul has warned the assembly of Christ to judge itself if it wishes to avoid being judged by its Lord. He also assures the Church that "when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." (I Corinthians 11:31-32) We are reminded here of the ancient Collect for Purity:

Almighty God,
unto Whom all hearts are open,
all desires known,
and from Whom no secrets are hid,
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts
by the inspiration of Thy Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love Thee,
and worthily magnify Thy Holy Name,
through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

These penetrating eyes expose our desires which we had so foolishly thought to be well hidden. Nothing escapes the scrutiny of these eyes of fire which keep careful watch over the lamps which are the Church. The writer of Hebrews, thinking along this line, has written: "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with Whom we have to do." (Hebrews 4:13)

The prophet Malachi describes Him as a Refiner seated before His fire, separating the pure metal from the dross. The Father is the Refiner and His Son is the fire, for does not the Scripture say that His Word is like a fire? (Jeremiah 23:29) The Psalmist, speaking of the cleansing fire of the Presence, sings: "For Thou, O God, hast proved us: Thou hast tried us, as silver is tried." (Psalm 66:10) He is the One who declares: "I the LORD search the heart. I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doing." (Jere-17:10)

We see by these things that fire speaks of testing, divine anger, and purifying. It not only indicates the clear and penetrating insight of the Son of Man, but it also expresses His indignation when He detects that which is sin. His is a burning gaze which consumes that which is of the flesh, and warms and comforts all that is of His Spirit. "His eyes behold, His eyelids try, the children of men." Whether we find those eyes fear-inspiring or encouraging depends upon our walk before Him. These eyes are upon us, dear friend in Christ, and they are searching us to see if we are building on the True Foundation with gold, silver, and precious stones, or wood, hay and stubble. It behooves us to have the heart of David who prayed: "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any evil way in me, and lead me in the Way everlasting." We need to openly confess our sins to Him from Whom we cannot hide our hypocrisy. He knows when

our lamp is full of the oil of the Spirit, our wick perfectly trimmed, and the flame of the Presence burning brightly. In this sense He is seen as High Priest.

It is also to be noted that the purifying, consuming Presence of God is symbolized throughout Scripture by fire. One has but to think of the burning bush, where the Eternal revealed Himself as the great "I Am." Or of Mount Sinai which was "wrapped in smoke because Yahweh descended upon it in fire." Or of the wilderness journey when "Jehovah went before them by night in a pillar of fire." Or of the words of John the baptizer who said: "He who is coming will baptize you with the Holy Spirit, even with fire," and of the Day of Pentecost, when "there appeared unto them tongues of fire, resting on each of them." This is to say that the Presence of God was in the burning bush. The Presence from on high descended upon the Mount. The divine Presence went before His people in their wilderness journey. The baptism of the Holy Spirit was the outpouring of the fire of the Presence. I take it that there was a visible, real fire in each of these instances, but the fire was a 'sign' of God's Presence in the midst of His people. The flame of fire in the eyes of the Son of Man is a declaration of the fact that our Lord is the living Presence in human form, tabernacled among His people.

F E E T L I K E F I N E B R A S S

Brass is always a symbol of judgment in Scripture. It is not that the feet of Jesus are actually made out of

brass, but that He is being depicted as the Righteous Judge. The word translated "brass" in the KJV is perhaps better rendered "bronze," but either way the meaning is the same. This particular metal used as a symbol in the Bible always stands for judgment. In the court of the Wilderness Tabernacle stood the Altar of Sacrifice where the Lamb was slain, and sin laid on the Victim and judged by fire. There was also the Laver of Brass with its cleansing waters where the priesthood cleansed hands and feet that had been defiled by contact with the earth. There was also the Brazen Serpent which spoke symbolically of sin under condemnation, just as Christ was judged for our sins when the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Cf. John 3:14) In the vision of Daniel recorded in chapter ten, we find a 'man' who is clothed in linen, with a golden girdle about his loins, with eyes like lamps of fire, and feet the color of polished brass." It is he who reveals to Daniel "what shall befall thy people in the latter days." The student will immediately observe certain similarities between this mysterious person and the Son of Man of John's vision.

These are the feet of the One who is to crush the head of the Serpent, according to the ancient promise of Genesis 3:15. The fulfilment of this glorious prophecy is part of the Major Melody of the Apocalypse. Since the last book of the Bible is concerned with the judgments of the Son of Man, and with the wrath of the Lamb, it is not surprising to find that His feet are described as brass, for they are feet destined to work vengeance upon His enemies. It is of this that the

hymn writer sings in the Battle Hymn of the Republic: "Mine eyes have seen the Glory of the Coming of the LORD, He is trampling out the vineyards where the grapes of wrath are stored." The Son of Man is the fearful Personage who in judgment will tread the wine press of the wrath of God and trample His enemies under His feet. (Revelation 19:15; Isaiah 63:3 and Psalm 60:12) Symbolically the feet of molten brass speak of the dread Day of Jehovah when the lifeblood of rebellious sinners will be crushed out like the juice of the grape in an earthen winepress.

AS IF THEY BURNED IN A FURNACE

This "fine brass" is better envisioned as "incandescent bronze alloy," so heated to a white heat in a blazing furnace that it is unbearable to look upon. These molten feet are feet of power that march ever onward toward that great Day of Judgment which has been preset in the timetables of the Almighty. They are irresistible feet which shall one day come with tremendous crushing force against all who resist the Lordship of God's Messiah.

HIS VOICE AS THE SOUND OF MANY WATERS

What a tremendous word picture of the voice of The Son of Man! One can almost hear the deafening roar of a thousand cataracts plunging and splashing in the falls at Niagra! When He speaks all other sounds are silenced. The bitter cries of the rebels are swallowed up in the thundering speech of the Judge of all men

pronounces the final doom of His enemies and casts them into the Lake of Fire. It is a terrible voice. It is the Voice of God which was also heard in the vision of Ezekiel, where the sound of the wings of the Cherubim are likened to the "noise of great waters, as the Voice of the Almighty." (Ezekiel 1:24 and 42:2) The student will again observe that the Son of Man who is in the midst of the Church is none other than the Lord God Himself. This is the consistent testimony of all of the symbols of this vision, as we compare each with other portions of Scripture.

This is the Voice that came to the prophet Jeremiah "Say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation: He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout, like those who tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth, for the Lord hath a controversy with the nations; He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 25:30-31) Yes, the Voice of The Son of Man, like the Voice of Jehovah, is powerful and full of majesty. (Cf. Job 40:9)

This is the Voice of Him whose Word thundered forth to bring the universes into existence, whose divine fiat brought forth a glorious creation out of nothing! ($E=MC^2$!) This is the Voice of Him Who thundered, "Lazarus, come forth!" and he that was dead for four days, came forth from death to life. This is the Voice of the Son of Man who hushed the

turbulent storms, and calmed the waters of the Sea of Galilee. It is the Voice of the Omnipotent One.

There can be no doubt but that every reader of this wonderful passage who had a knowledge of the Psalms would know that the Son of Man was being identified as the Jehovah of the O.T. In the 29th Psalm there is to be found a wonderful eulogy of the Voice of the LORD. David sings:

The voice of the LORD is upon the waters:
The God of (The) Glory thundereth!

The voice of the LORD is powerful:
The voice of the LORD is full of majesty.

Wherever the Voice of Jehovah is described in the Old Testament it is in terms that are immediately identifiable with that of The Son of Man in John's vision.

IN HIS RIGHT HAND

Symbolically speaking, the "right hand" in Scripture speaks of the place of authority and prestige. Those who formulated the testament of faith known popularly as The Apostles' Creed, understood this when they affirmed that Jesus arose from the dead to sit "on the right hand of God the Father." This understanding was gotten from the Scriptures, for in them we have many statements that Christ has been exalted to the "right hand" of God. In Mark 16:20 we read that after the Lord Jesus had commissioned His disciples to "go

into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature." Then, says Mark, "He was received up into heaven, and sat on the right hand of God." In other words, Jesus, The Son of Man, was exalted to a position of prestige as the Father's equal. In his sermon on the Day of Pentecost, Peter quoted a portion of the Messianic Psalm 110, applying it to Jesus, saying: "The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit Thou on My right hand until I make Thy foes Thy footstool." (Acts 2:34-35) With these words The Son of Man is identified as David's greater "son," The Messiah. On another occasion, after his miraculous liberation from prison, Peter boldly told the high priest and the Sadducees: "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour..." (Acts 5:30-31) Paul, writing to the Romans, says: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ who died, yea rather, who is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us!" (Romans 8:34) Again, in his epistle to the church at Ephesus, Paul explains the exalted position of the Son of Man in no uncertain terms. Speaking of the mighty power of God in the direction of the saints, "which He wrought in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and set Him at His own right hand in the heavenlies, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: and hath put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be the head over all things to the Church which is His body, the fullness of Him that filleth all

in all." (Ephesians 1:20-23) Inasmuch as the terms "principality," "power," "dominion," "thrones," and "might," are names for the angelic echelons, Paul is affirming that Christ has been exalted above the very highest angelic powers, both holy and unholy, and is seated as God's equal on His level. (For a detailed analysis of this passage see the author's commentary on Ephesians.)

The Believer is also exhorted to "Seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God." (Colossians 3:1) And the writer of the epistle to Hebrews assures his readers that Christ is the effulgence of the Glory of God, the exact character of His Person, the Upholder of the universes by the dynamic of His Word, who purged our sins, and then "sat down on the right hand of The Majesty on high." (Hebrews 1:3) There can be absolutely no doubt but that the Son of Man is here relating the ones referred to symbolically as "stars" to Himself in a very special way. They enjoy a place of prestige and authority because of their relationship to the Son of Man, just as His position is based on His relationship to the Father.

Since The Son of Man in the apocalyptic vision is perfectly identified with the Jehovah of the O.T., we shall need to see what the Old Testament has to say about the "right hand" of God. Moses and the children of Israel sing a wonderful song of the Omnipotent One in Exodus 15:1-19. Among the marvelous verses that exalt Jehovah as the Almighty is verse six which tes-

tifies: "Thy right hand, O LORD, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O LORD, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." Here the absolute strength of the LORD is shown by the synonymous parallelism of the Hebrew poetry. His absolute strength is displayed in the way that He dashes His enemies into fragments! The "right hand" of God, therefore, also speaks of His absolute omnipotence. (Cf. Psalm 17:7)

S E V E N S T A R S

Held in the right hand of the Son of Man in John's vision are "seven stars." As may be seen by a quick glance at verse 20 in Revelation, chapter one, the "stars" symbolize the "angels" (or messengers) of the seven churches in the vision. Since they are in His right hand we know that (1) they are under His control, (2) they are under His protection (Cf. John 10:28-29), and (3) they speak as per His authority. The position of God's messengers in His hand means that they need have no fear as long as they are speaking that Word which He has given. It also means that they have reason to be afraid if they seek to speak any word which is not given them by the Son of Man. "In His hand" means under His protection and in a place of privilege and high authority.

It should be remembered that the word "angel" has the basic meaning of "messenger," and may refer to either human or spirit beings. I take it that the term has reference here to the ministers who have been given spiritual oversight of the individual congrega-

tions listed by John. Furthermore, since the number 'seven' is also used symbolically to show that the entire assembly of Christ, in all ages, is in view, then it must also mean that the seven "stars" declare that the ministers of God's Word, throughout all ages, are involved. Since God does not instruct angels directly through the mediation of man's lips, it is also evident that the "angels" here referred to through the symbolism of stars, are human messengers and not spirit beings.

Dr. Joseph Augustus Seiss, one of God's messengers of a previous generation, wrote concerning these angels: "Ministers have relations to Christ and to the Church which ordinary Church members have not. They partake directly of Christ's authority, and are responsible directly to Him, and are upheld by His right hand, beyond the power of men or angels to displace them. What a lesson for ministers, as to the holiness of their office, the solemnity of their responsibilities, the necessity of unswerving fidelity, and the exercise of every confidence in their sacred functions. They are in Christ's hand. If they are unfaithful none can deliver them out of His hand; but if true to their position, none can touch them, or quench their light. They shall shine as the stars forever. What a lesson for the people as to the authority of those ministrations which they are so prone to despise. Dealing with the regular ministers of the Churches, you are dealing with the jewels on Christ's right hand. And what a lesson for all as to the Divine majesty and glory of our Lord! The Pauls, and Johns,

and Husses, and Luthers, and Cranmers, and Knoxes, and Wesleys, and all the hosts of those who have been teaching and guiding the Churches for these 1800 years are no more than the rings upon His fingers. But they are jewels to Him. He holds them as precious. Disregarded as they may be of men, they are dear to Him. He holds them as a man holds what he most esteems. He holds them, for service now, and for judgment when He cometh. He holds them, for success against the hosts of evil, for glorious honour if they are faithful, and for eternal disgrace if they are not."

OUT OF HIS MOUTH *A SHARP TWO EDGED SWORD

Just as the idea of The Son of Man holding literal stars in His hand is foreign to what is actually being signified in the opening phrase of verse seventeen, so, also, the idea of Christ standing with a literal sword clenched between His teeth is out of the question here. A quick survey of Scriptures where the word "sword" is used symbolically will show us what is meant in our text. For example, in Isaiah 49:1-2, we find the words: "He hath made my mouth like a sharp sword." No one would take this to mean that the mouth of God's Servant was actually in the shape of a sword! It obviously means that the words which poured forth from his lips were cutting words with real penetrating power. As we shall see in a later study (in chapter 19) our Lord will slay His enemies "with the sword of His mouth." The "sword" here in the vision of John is undoubtedly a symbolic declar-

ation that the words which issue from the lips of the Son of Man are words which can protect His own, and slay His enemies.

The writer of Hebrews (4:12) teaches us that "The Word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The symbol in our text is a "twoedged-sword." Its obvious meaning is that the words which The Son of Man speaks are the words of the LORD God Himself. Jesus Christ did not speak His own ideas and express just human opinions. He spoke only that which His Father in heaven authorized Him to speak. This is the Son of Man who said: "He who rejects Me and does not receive My WORD has a judge, the Word that I have spoken will be his judge on the Last Day. I have not spoken of My own authority. The Father who sent Me commanded Me what to say and to speak." (John 12:48) The "sword" of the vision may be understood to signify The Word of God. It has the power to slay all who refuse to submit to the Word of His mouth because it is the same WORD by which He brought the universes into existence!

This symbol of the sword splaying forth from the mouth of the Son of Man, on the basis of Scripture, is a way of saying that Jesus speaks for God as God. It is clear that the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, is the irresistible blade before which the cosmic enemies of Christ shall one day fall.

The "sword" of the Son of Man vision is a weapon of judgment. The idea here is that expressed in Isaiah 11:4 where the prophet cries: "He shall smite the earth with the rod of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He slay the wicked." Not only does the Sword of the Word uncover the secret thoughts of the Believer, but it slays the Unbeliever in his ugly rebellion against his Creator. Again the symbol is used to declare that The Son of Man is the Righteous Judge of the universes and of His creatures.

Whether you are a Believer or an unbeliever, you must realize that there is a judicial process inherent in every faithful presentation of the Gospel of Christ. Not only does the Word of God which was presented to the Jew bring judgment upon him who rejects Jesus as the Messiah of Israel, but it also condemns all who reject Him as Saviour and LORD. The Word "saves" all who bow to His Lordship and call upon His name to be saved, and slays with eternal death those who reject His offer of Life to those who accept Him. I take it, then, that the symbolism of the "sword" in our text refers to the devastating judgment accorded all who reject Christ, The Word of God.

HIS COUNTENANCE * AS THE SUN

The Church has been described as a complete (7-fold) LAMP. The Messengers given by God to the Church are complete (7-fold) like STARS. Our Lord outshines them all, for He shines like the blazing sun at its zenith in the heavens! Just as a lamp fades in-

to dull insignificance, and the stars into seeming oblivion, at the appearance of the sun, so the light which the Church of Jesus Christ has shed through all of the centuries, and the light given forth by its most gifted and eloquent preachers, is as nothing compared to Him Who is The Light of the world.

In connection with the symbolism expressed here we might point out that the Sun, in Scripture, is often emblematic of Christ, the Moon of the Church, and the Stars of Angels or Messengers. (The serious student of Biblical symbolism is referred to the authors printed lectures on "Word Keys Which Unlock Scripture," and to the article on "STARS AS SIGNS.") It will be seen that even the twelve constellations that lie in the path of the sun form a tabernacle in which the Gospel is proclaimed, and the Word shines forth.

I F E L L A T H I S F E E T

The vision of the Son of Man in all of His glory and strength was too much for John. Like Isaiah of old he felt "undone" by what he beheld. One is also reminded of the experience of the Apostle Paul who was struck down in unbelief by the Light of the Presence, as the young zealot journeyed with companions to the city of Damascus to apprehend followers of The Way whom he sought to persecute and kill.

The stunning effect of the vision of Jesus Christ as He really is overwhelms the Beloved Disciple. This is quite remarkable, inasmuch as John was the disci-

ple who often rested his head upon the Master's chest and knew Him more intimately than the rest. In this instance, however, John beholds his Lord in a way that was most unreal. Like Daniel who had absolutely no fear of the wrath of a king or the fangs of lions, but who swooned at the sight of his vision, John also is left without strength. Put yourself in John's place. Imagine your own reaction to such glory, power, ecstasy and majesty! Alerted by the blast of a trumpet and a voice like thunder to a scene of awesome splendor and full of radiance, we, too, would surely feel faint before such and out-of-this-world sight!

F E A R N O T

Prostrate before the Son of Man, John feels the firm touch of that powerful "right hand" and hears the wonderfully reassuring words, "Fear not!" Had John been the enemy of God the Son the outcome of this encounter would have been vastly different, and that powerful right hand would not have been gentle! Again the Son of Man is identified as Jehovah Himself as our Lord declares, "I am the first and the last." It is of interest to observe that this statement is employed here in connection with the word of comfort, "Fear not!" It appears three times in the writings of Isaiah and three times in the Apocalypse, and, each time, it is in terms of assurance. It is God the Son who speaks to John, for only God can rightfully speak of Himself as "the first and the last." In Isaiah 44:6 we read: "Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his Redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first

and I am the last: and beside Me there is no God." (Cf. Isaiah 41:4; 48:12) It is again evident that these words, like each of the symbols used in this vision, are open proclamations that The Son of Man is none other than the Jehovah of the Old Testament. All affirm that the One Who stands in the midst of the Church is the Author and Consummator of all things, the "King of Israel, even his Redeemer the LORD of hosts."

I A M H E T H A T L I V E T H

A more accurate translation of the Greek text here would be, "I am the Living One." The Speaker is The Life (John 1:4; 14:16) Who has Life in Himself, and is the Fountain and Source of Life to others. When God robed Himself in our humanity, through the virgin birth, He did not begin to be. The incarnation simply manifested the Living One who has always existed by exegeting Him from the hidden realm of the Spirit into the visible realm of the flesh. (John 1:1-3) This title, "The Living One," was a favorite with the Hebrew writers as a distinguishing appellation that noted the chief difference between their God and the dead gods of the heathen. The eternal Life of those who believe in Christ Jesus, and the eternal existence in the Lake of Fire of those who reject Him as Lord, as well as the immortality of the angelic hosts either in heaven or the place of burning, all owe their eternity to The Living One. (Cf. Jeremiah 10:10) Paul speaks of the Church both as the church of Christ and "the church of the Living God." (Cf. I Timothy 3:15)

The church of Christ and the church of God are, of course, one and the same organism, for The Son of Man is both God and Christ.

W A S D E A D — A M A L I V E

These must surely have been invigorating words to the apostle who, although he was not actually dead, (as his Master had once been), yet he was "as dead" before the divine Presence. Not only were these words reassuring to John, but they are a pledge to each of us who are Believers that we who follow Him to the death will, like Him, know the Life of God forever more.

The full force of these words may best be gotten by hearing them in the context of a literal translation. "Fear not; I am the first and the last, the Living One Who came to be dead and behold living I am, unto the ages of the ages." The Son of Man is hereby identified as the One Who, by His resurrection, has placed death and hell behind and under Him. (Cf. Romans 6:9 and Acts 13:34) Nothing is quite so sure to dispel all fear from the heart of a Christian as is the complete assurance that he has a Risen Saviour. "Fear not!" The Son of Man is the One over Whom death and hell have absolutely no power whatsoever!

It is well nigh impossible for our spiritually dull minds to comprehend the mystery of the death of the Son of Man in terms of His Godhood, or His Life in terms of His manhood. How the eternally Existent

One could ever truly be dead and yet, at the same time, be ever alive is beyond our finite powers, just as it seems incomprehensible that our Lord should be both true man and true God at one and the same time. With the apostle Paul we cry, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh ..." (I Timothy 3:15) With a sense of awe we declare that He was "crucified, dead, and buried," for He is The Living One. Charles Wesley captured some of the mystery of it all in his lines:

O Love Divine, what hast Thou done?
The incarnate God hath died for me!
The Father's co-eternal Son
Bore all my sins upon the tree:
The Son of God for me hath died,
My Lord, my Love, is crucified.

This announcement that He is the One who "was dead" is immediately followed by the assurance that He is "alive forevermore," or as it is more literally translated, "Alive I am unto the ages of the ages." Thousands of aeons have and will succeed thousands of other aeons, and still The Son of Man will be found reigning with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Having found the Creator propitious because of the Gift He Himself provided in the Person of His only Son, we need not be anxious lest He have a successor who will look upon us with less favor than the Son of Man! He who stands in the midst of the seven golden lampstands is the Living One whose interrupted Life shall now endless be. He is proven to be death-proof indeed!

The English word "Amen" is a transcription of the Greek and of the Hebrew. It is often translated by the word "verily" in the KJV of the Bible. (For a study of the word Amen see page 66 of this commentary.)

T H E K E Y S

The word "key" is a symbolic word which denotes authority. It is used in some instances of shutting up a place of death, with a subsequent unlocking as in Judges 3:23-25. The judge, Ehud, locked doors that were later opened by the servants of the enemy of the people of God. This is in marked contrast with the One who has the Key of David, who opens and no man is able to shut, and who shuts and no man is able to open. (Cf. Revelation 3:7) The servants of the Lord may be limited in their authority, but not The Son of Man.

The Scripture to which we have just made reference is first found in the prophecy of Isaiah, and the Son of Man takes it unto Himself in His letter to the church at Philadelphia. (Cf. Isaiah 22:22 and Revelation 3:7)

Keys are used in a symbolic sense of authority in Matthew 16:19 where authority for binding and loosing are given to Peter, and in Matthew 18:18 where it is made clear that the same "keys" or authority was also given to all of the disciples. (It would be well to observe here that the Greek tense and syntax in these passages make it clear that the "binding and loosing" is governed by what has already been bound or loosed

in heaven. The apostles are not given power over God to dictate what He shall bind or loose. On the contrary, the disciples of Christ are authorized to declare "bound" that which He has bound in His Word, and to "loose" that which He releases in His Word. Just as a policeman "binds" only that which the Law allows him to bind in its "name," so, also, the disciples (including Peter) are authorized to bind only that which Christ allows to be bound "in His name," and vice versa. One further remark, and then we refer you to our commentary on Matthew's Gospel. We can say with confidence that Christ does not give into sinful man's hands, even though he be among the redeemed, the authority to exclude anyone from heaven or to send them to hell, other than on the grounds given in His Word. We have the keys of His authority to declare that those who accept Him as Lord and Saviour are loosed from their sins and are destined for heaven, and that those who reject Him as Lord and Saviour are bound in their sin and destined for the Lake of Fire.

O F H E L L A N D O F D E A T H

The word here translated "hell" is the Greek word HADES which is the equivalent of the Hebrew word SHEOL and refers to the abode of departed spirits of the lost. Those who die "in Christ" go immediately to be with the Lord, for Paradise (once a division of Hades) was transported to heaven at the ascension of the resurrected Lord. Those who die "in their sins" go immediately to Hades, here translated "hell," to

await the Second Resurrection, their judgment before the Great White Throne, and their final doom in the Lake of Fire. (Cf. Revelation 20) It is unfortunate, if we may venture to say so, that the authorized version translates three different Greek words (HADES, GEHENNA, and TARTARO) by the same word "hell." As Dr. John Walvoord has stated in his concise commentary on "The Revelation of Jesus Christ," in order "To avoid confusion it is better to transliterate the word HADES and to use the word HELL as referring to the eternal state only. The confusion is in the translation, not the original." (pp. 47) For a detailed study of this important word the student is invited to refer to the topic "HELL" in the author's word book, "WORD KEYS WHICH UNLOCK SCRIPTURE."

Space does not permit a detailed analysis of this important key word here, but let it be made clear that what is being said is that The Son of Man has the keys (that is, the "authority") over the abode of the dead, and that He is sovereign over death as well.

WRITE THE THINGS WHICH THOU HAST SEEN

Outlines of the Apocalypse vary from commentary to commentary which seems a bit strange inasmuch as The Son of Man Himself has given us His own 3-fold outline here in verse 19. First of all there are the things which the Seer has already seen, namely the Vision of the Son of Man (chapter one.) Secondly, he is instructed to write concerning "the things which

are." Since chapters two and three of the Apocalypse contain the Seven Letters of Jesus to His church, in which the Son of Man views "the things which are," I take it that this is the second division. The third division, and by far the largest inasmuch as we have already been told that the main content of the book is prophetic (1:3) are "the things which shall be hereafter."

T H E M Y S T E R Y

In the N.T. a "mystery" is a secret which is revealed to the followers of Christ, and hidden from those who have not been born-from-above. Therefore we find The Son of Man explaining the "mystery" to John. Since the symbols of the individual golden lampstands and the seven stars might be misunderstood, the mystery or "revealed secret" is plainly declared. The seven golden lampstands are a symbol of the seven churches, and the seven stars are a symbol of the seven angels or messengers, as we have already seen. We shall see again, from time to time in our study, that those symbols which are not explained by other Scripture will be explained in the context in which they are found. This is a "signified" book (1:1), but its "signs" are designed to be understood for it is a book of unveiling and not of hiding. It is the Revelation of Jesus Christ!



A TRANSLATION OF



REVELATION

CHAPTER ONE

THE UNVEILING of Jesus Christ, which God gave to Him to show His slaves that which must come to pass with great rapidity; and He sent it in sign-language by way of His messenger unto His slave John.

2 Who made a record of the Word of God, even of the Testimony of Jesus Christ; and of all things which he saw.

3 Happy is the person who reads, and those who listen to the words of this prophecy, and who obey its message; for the time is imminent.

4 JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia Minor: Unmerited favor be unto you, and peace from Him Who always has been, is now, and Who shall come; and from the Complete Spirit Who is before His throne;

5 And from Jesus Christ, Who is the faithful Martyr, the Firstborn from among the dead, even the ruler of the kings of the earth. Unto Him Who loves us and Who has loosed us from our sins in His own blood,

6 And has made us to be a kingdom and priests unto God, even His Father: to Him be The Glory and the absolute rule, for all of eternity. Amen.

7 Watch closely! He is coming in the clouds; and every eye shall see Him as He really is: (and that includes those who pierced Him!); and all of the tribes of the earth shall shriek bitterly because of Him. Even so, that is Truth!

8 I Am Alpha and Omega, the Origin and the Consummation, says the Lord, Who always has been, is now, and is yet to come, even the Almighty.

9 I John, your brother and sharer with you in tribulation, in kingdom, and in patience which is of Jesus Christ, was on the island of Patmos because I had preached the Word of God, bearing testimony to Jesus Christ.

10 I was projected in Spirit unto the Day

of the Lord, and heard behind me a resonant voice, ringing like a trumpet, 11 Saying, I Am Alpha and Omega, the First and Last One. Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches which are in Asia Minor: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.

12 And I turned to see whose Voice I was hearing, and upon turning, I saw seven golden lampstands;

13 And in the midst of the seven lampstands there stood One resembling The Son of Man, clothed in a robe which hung to His feet, and high-girded about the chest with a belt of gold.

14 His head and His hair was like snow-white wool, and His eyes blazed like fire;

15 And His feet appeared to be molten bronze glowing from a furnace; and His voice roared like the pounding surf.

16 And in His right hand He held seven stars; and from His mouth went a sharp two-edged sword; and His countenance was ablaze like the noonday sun.

17 And when I saw Him thus, I dropped at His feet like a dead man. Then He placed His right hand upon me, saying, Don't be afraid! I am the First and Last One.

18 I am He who lives, although I was dead; and, behold, I now live for all of eternity. Amen. I also have the keys of the prison house of departed spirits and of death.

19 Write down the things which you have seen, and the things which are, and those things which shall be hereafter.

20 Now for the revealed secret of the seven stars which you saw in My right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks.

20 The revealed secret of the seven stars is this: they are symbols for the messengers of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands which you saw are symbols for the Complete Church.

ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ ΙΩΑΝΝΟΥ

REVELATION OF JOHN

ΑΠΟΚΑΛΥΨΙΣ Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ἣν ἔδωκεν αὐτῷ ὁ θεός,
 Revelation of Jesus Christ, which gave to him God,
 δεῖξαι τοῖς δούλοις αὐτοῦ ἃ δεῖ γενέσθαι ἐν τάχει, καὶ
 to show to his bondmen what things must take place shortly: and
 ἐσήμανεν ἀποστείλας διὰ τοῦ ἀγγέλου αὐτοῦ τῷ δούλῳ αὐτοῦ
 he signified [it], having sent by his angel to his bondman
 ὁ Ἰωάννης, ὃς ἐμαρτύρησεν τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τὴν
 John, who testified the word of God and the
 μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ὅσα ἑεῖδεν. ὁ μακά-
 testimony of Jesus Christ, whatsoever things he saw. Bless-
 ριος ὁ ἀναγινώσκων, καὶ οἱ ἀκούοντες τοὺς λόγους
 ed [is] he that reads, and they that hear the words
 τῆς προφητείας, καὶ τηροῦντες τὰ ἐν αὐτῇ γεγραμμένα
 of the prophecy, and keep the things in it written;
 ὁ γὰρ καιρὸς ἐγγύς.
 for the time [is] near.

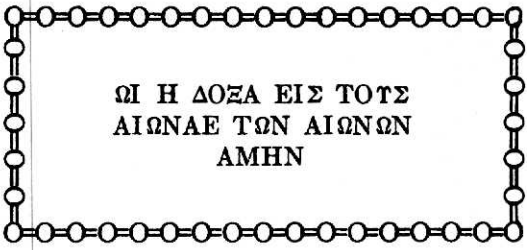
4 ὁ Ἰωάννης ταῖς ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαις ταῖς ἐν τῇ Ἀσίᾳ.
 John to the seven assemblies which [are] in Asia:
 χάρις ὑμῖν καὶ εἰρήνη ἀπὸ τοῦ ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ
 Grace to you and peace from him who is and who was and who [is]
 ἐρχόμενος καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἑπτὰ πνευμάτων ἃ ἰστὶν ἐνώπιον
 to come; and from the seven Spirits which are before
 τοῦ θρόνου αὐτοῦ. 5 καὶ ἀπὸ Ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ, ὁ μάρτυς ὁ
 his throne; and from Jesus Christ, the witness
 πιστός, ὁ πρωτότοκος ἑκ τῶν νεκρῶν. καὶ ὁ ἀρχὼν τῶν
 faithful, the firstborn from among the dead, and the ruler of the
 βασιλείων τῆς γῆς. τῷ ἡγαπήσαντι ἡμᾶς, καὶ λού-
 kings of the earth. To him who loved us, and wash-
 σαντι ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τῶν ἁμαρτιῶν ὁ ἡμῶν ἐν τῷ αἵματι αὐτοῦ.
 ed us from our sins in his blood,
 6 καὶ ἐποίησεν ἡμᾶς βασιλεῖς καὶ ἱερεῖς τῷ θεῷ καὶ πατρὶ
 and made us kings and priests to God and Father
 αὐτοῦ. αὐτῷ ἡ δόξα καὶ τὸ κράτος εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας τῶν
 his: to him [be] the glory and the might to the ages of the
 αἰώνων. Ἀμήν.
 ages. Amen.

7 Ἰδοὺ, ἔρχεται μετὰ τῶν νεφελῶν, καὶ ὄψεται αὐτὸν πᾶς
 Behold, he comes with the clouds, and shall see him every
 ὀφθαλμός, καὶ οἵτινες αὐτὸν ἐξεκέντησαν καὶ κόψονται
 eye, and they which him pierced, and shall wall
 ἐπ' αὐτὸν πᾶσαι αἱ φυλαὶ τῆς γῆς. ναὶ, ἀμήν.
 on account of him all the tribes of the earth. Yes, amen.

8 Ἐγὼ εἰμι τὸ Ἀ καὶ τὸ Ω, ἀρχὴ καὶ τέλος. λέγει
 I am the A and the Ω, beginning and ending, says
 ὁ κύριος, ὁ ὢν καὶ ὁ ἦν καὶ ὁ ἐρχόμενος, ὁ παντο-
 the Lord, who is and who was and who [is] to come, the Al-
 κράτωρ.
 mighty.

9 Ἐγὼ ὁ Ἰωάννης, ὁ καὶ ἀδελφὸς ὑμῶν καὶ συγκοινωνός
 I John, also brother your and fellow-partaker
 ἐν τῇ θλίψει καὶ ἐν τῇ βασιλείᾳ καὶ ὑπομονῇ Ἰησοῦ χρισ-
 in the tribulation and in the kingdom and endurance of Jesus Christ,
 τοῦ, ἐγενόμην ἐν τῇ νήσῳ τῇ καλουμένῃ Πάτμῳ, διὰ
 was in the island which [is] called Patmos, because of
 τὸν λόγον τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ διὰ τὴν μαρτυρίαν Ἰησοῦ χρισ-
 the word of God and because of the testimony of Jesus Christ.

τοῦ.¹ 10 ἐγενόμην ἐν πνεύματι ἐν τῇ κυριακῇ ἡμέρᾳ· καὶ
 I became in [the] Spirit on the Lord's day, and
 ἤκουσα ὀπίσω μου φωνὴν μεγάλην ὡς σάλπιγγος, 11 λεγού-
 I heard behind me a voice loud as of a trumpet, say-
 σης, Ἐγώ εἰμι τὸ Α καὶ τὸ Ω, ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος· καί,¹
 ing, I am the Α and the Ω, the first and the last; and,
 Ὁ βλέπεις γράψον εἰς βιβλίον, καὶ πέμψον ταῖς ἐκκλησίαις
 What thou seest write in a book, and send to the assemblies
 ταῖς ἐν Ἀσίᾳ, εἰς Ἐφεσον, καὶ εἰς Σμύρναν, καὶ εἰς
 which [are] in Asia: to Ephesus, and to Smyrna, and to
 Πέργαμον, καὶ εἰς Θυάτειρα, καὶ εἰς Σάρδεϊς, καὶ εἰς Φιλα-
 Pergamos, and to Thyatira, and to Sardis, and to Phila-
 δέλφειαν, καὶ εἰς Λαοδίκειαν. 12 καὶ ἐπέστρεψα βλέπειν
 delphia, and to Laodicea. And I turned to see
 τὴν φωνὴν ἣτις ἐλάλησεν μετ' ἐμοῦ· καὶ ἐπιστρέψας εἶδον
 the voice which spoke with me, and having turned I saw
 ἑπτὰ λυχνίας χρυσαῖς, 13 καὶ ἐν μέσῳ τῶν ἑπτὰ λυχ-
 seven lampstands golden, and in [the] midst of the seven lamp-
 νίων ὅμοιον υἱῷ ἀνθρώπου, ἐνδεδυμένον
 stands [one] like [the] Son of man, clothed in [a garment]
 ποδῶρη, καὶ περιεζωσμένον πρὸς τοῖς ὤμοισιν ζώνην
 reaching to the feet, and girt about with at the breasts a girdle
 χρυσοῦν. 14 ἡ δὲ κεφαλὴ αὐτοῦ καὶ αἱ τρίχες λευκαὶ ὥσει
 golden: and his head and hair white as if
 ἔριον λευκόν, ὡς χιών· καὶ οἱ ὀφθαλμοὶ αὐτοῦ ὡς φλόξ πυρός·
 wool white, as snow; and his eyes as a flame of fire;
 15 καὶ οἱ πόδες αὐτοῦ ὅμοιοι χαλκολιβάνῳ ὡς ἐν καμίνῳ
 and his feet like fine brass, as if in a furnace [they]
 πεπυρωμένοι· καὶ ἡ φωνὴ αὐτοῦ ὡς φωνὴ ὑδάτων πολλῶν·
 glowing; and his voice as [the] voice of waters many,
 16 καὶ ἔχων ἐν τῇ δεξιᾷ αὐτοῦ χεῖρ ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας ἐπτά· καὶ ἐκ
 and having in right his hand stars seven, and out of
 τοῦ στόματος αὐτοῦ ῥομφαία δίστομος ὀξεῖα ἐκπορευομένη· καὶ
 his mouth a sword two-edged sharp going forth, and
 ἡ ὄψις αὐτοῦ ὡς ὁ ἥλιος φαίνει ἐν τῇ δυνάμει αὐτοῦ. 17 καὶ
 his countenance as the sun shines in its power. And
 ὅτε εἶδον αὐτόν, ἐπεσα πρὸς τοὺς πόδας αὐτοῦ ὡς νεκρός· καὶ
 when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead: and
 ἐπέθηκεν τὴν δεξιάν αὐτοῦ χεῖρα ἐπ' ἐμέ, λέγων μοι,¹
 he laid his right hand upon me, saying to me,
 Μὴ φοβοῦ· ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ πρῶτος καὶ ὁ ἔσχατος, 18 καὶ ὁ
 Fear not; I am the first and the last, and the
 ζῶν, καὶ ἐγενόμην νεκρός, καὶ ἰδοὺ ζῶν εἰμι εἰς τοὺς
 living [one]: and I became dead, and behold I am to the
 αἰῶνας τῶν αἰώνων· ἀμήν· καὶ ἔχω τὰς κλείς τοῦ ᾧδου καὶ
 ages of the ages, Amen; and have the keys of hades and
 τοῦ θανάτου. 19 γράψον ἃ εἶδες, καὶ ἃ
 of death. Write the things which thou sawest and the things
 εἰσιν, καὶ ἃ μέλλει γίνεσθαι μετὰ ταῦτα· 20 τὸ
 which are, and the things which are about to take place after these. The
 μυστήριον τῶν ἑπτὰ ἀστέρων ὧν εἶδες ἐπὶ τῆς δεξιᾶς
 mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest on right hand
 μου, καὶ τὰς ἑπτὰ λυχνίας τὰς χρυσαῖς. οἱ ἑπτὰ ἀστέρες
 my, and the seven lampstands golden. The seven stars
 ἄγγελοι τῶν ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησιῶν εἰσιν· καὶ αἱ ἑπτὰ λυχνίαι
 angels of the seven assemblies are; and the seven lampstands
 ἃς εἶδες ἑπτὰ ἐκκλησίαι εἰσιν.
 which thou sawest seven assemblies are.



Ω Η ΔΟΞΑ ΕΙΣ ΤΟΤΣ
ΑΙΩΝΑΕ ΤΩΝ ΑΙΩΝΩΝ
ΑΜΗΝ



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The cover of this book is from a woodcut by Albrecht Durer who became famous for his engravings of the Apocalypse in his late twenties.

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